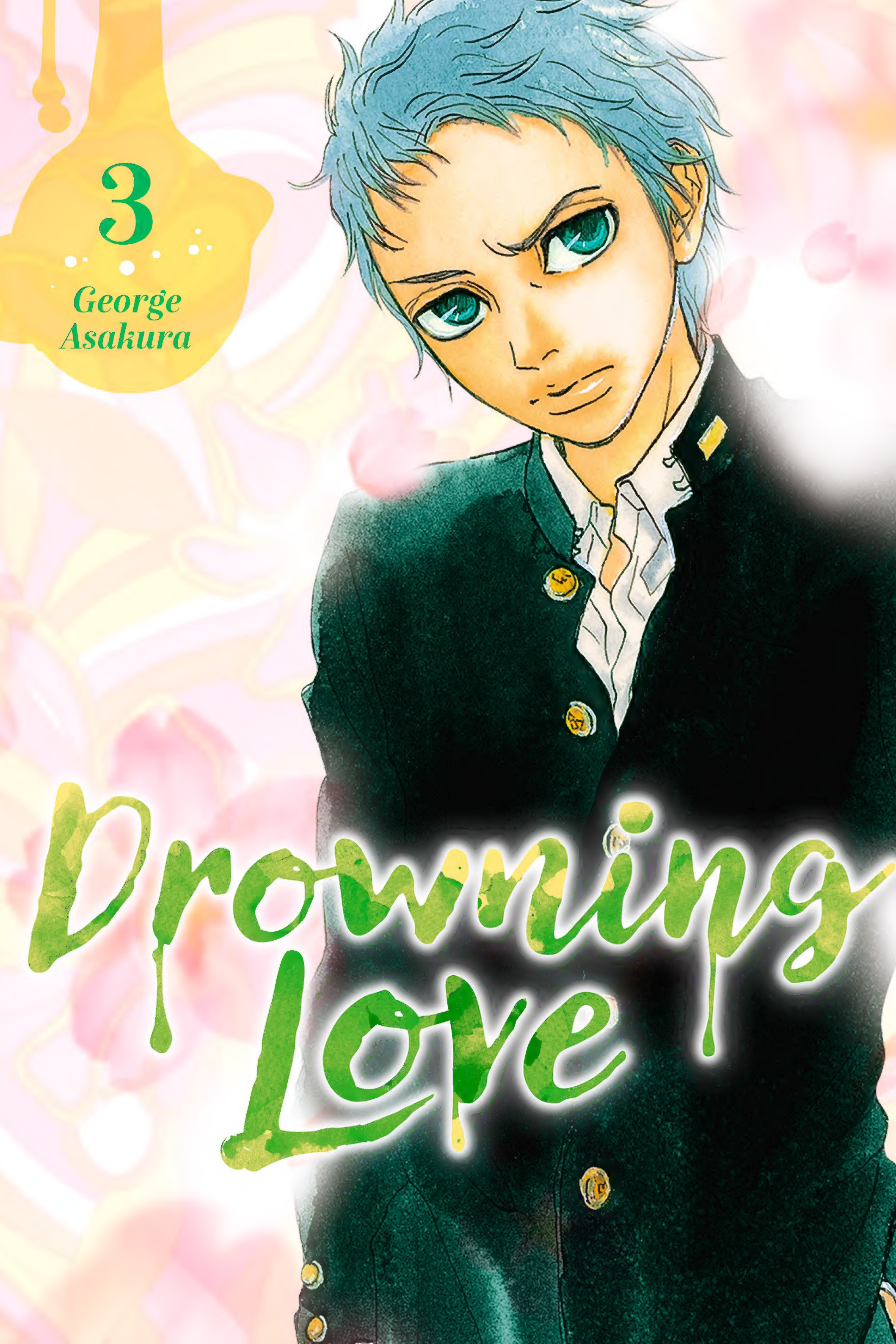


3

George
Asakura

Drowning Love

Drowning Love

Drowning Love

9 Gloom p5

10 Compromise p47

11 Ring of Fate p87

12 Night of the Festival p129

THE STORY SO FAR...

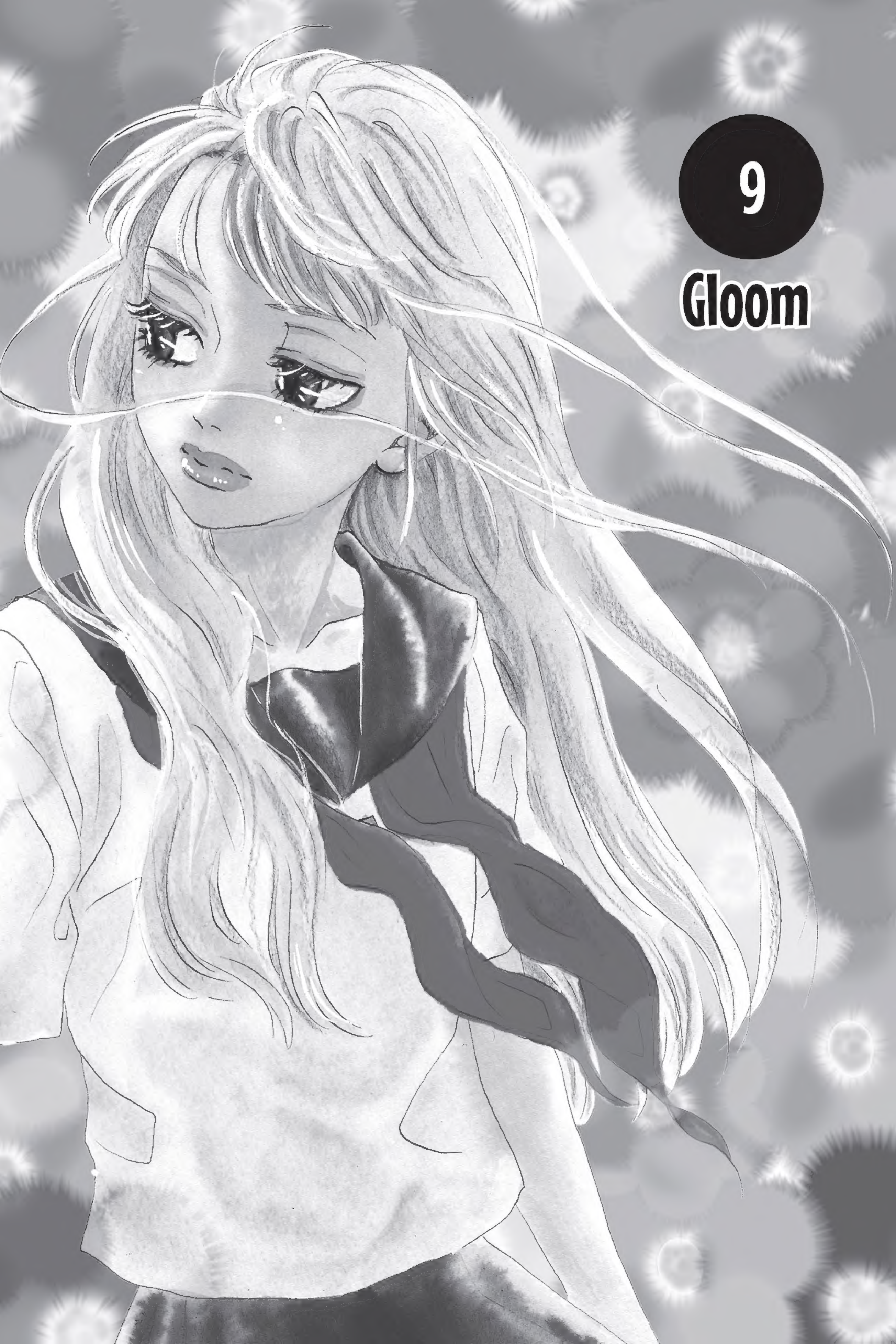
• • •

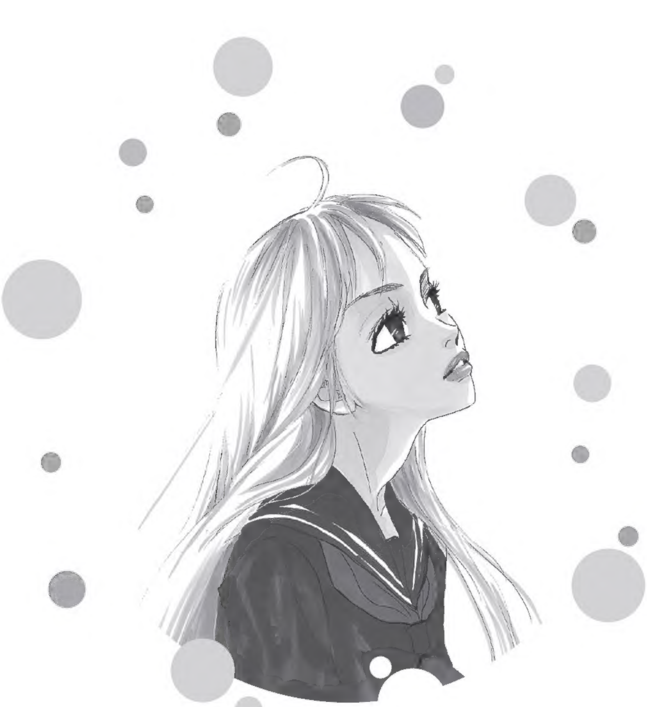
THE CLOSER YOUNG FASHION MODEL NATSUME GETS TO THE INTIMIDATING, OVERWHELMING KOU, THE MORE SHE IS DRAWN UNDER HIS SPELL. IN ORDER TO COMPETE FOR HIS ATTENTION, SHE THROWS HERSELF INTO HER WORK, AND HER PHOTOBOOK AND TELEVISION COMMERCIALS HAVE EARNED HER FAME OVERNIGHT. IN THE END, SHE AND KOU GET TOGETHER, AND NATSUME IS ELATED. BUT THEN...

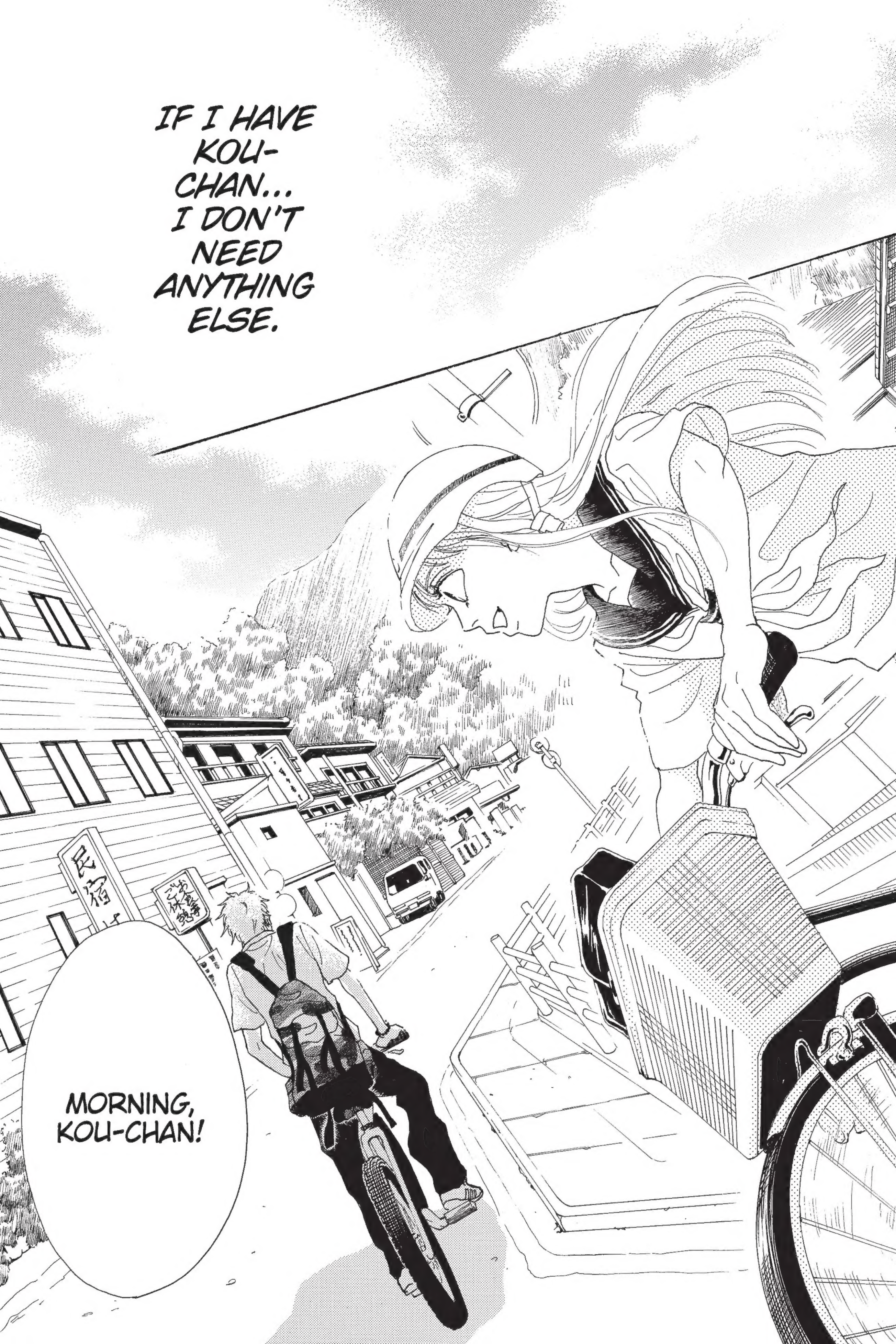
Drowning Love

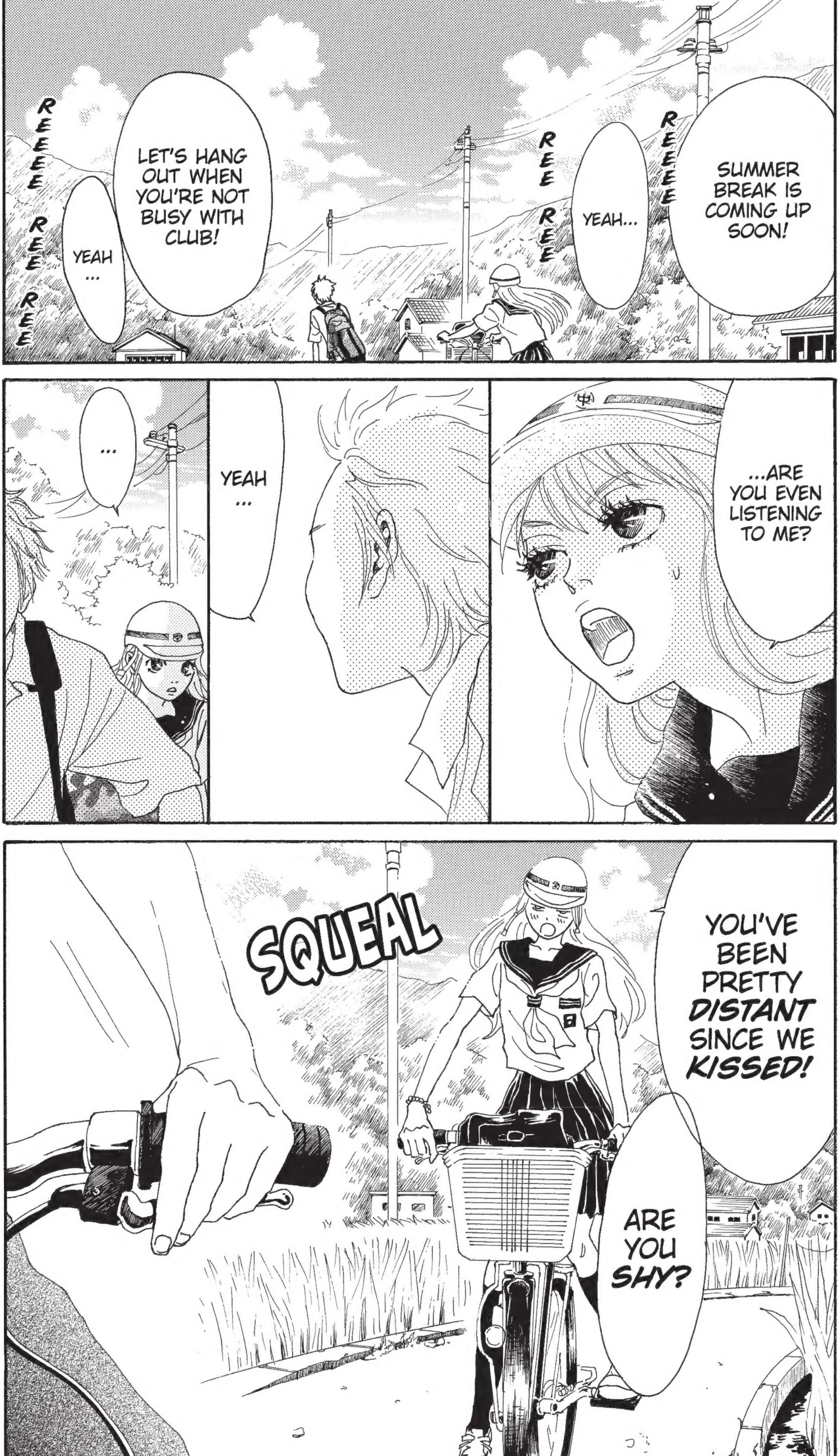
9

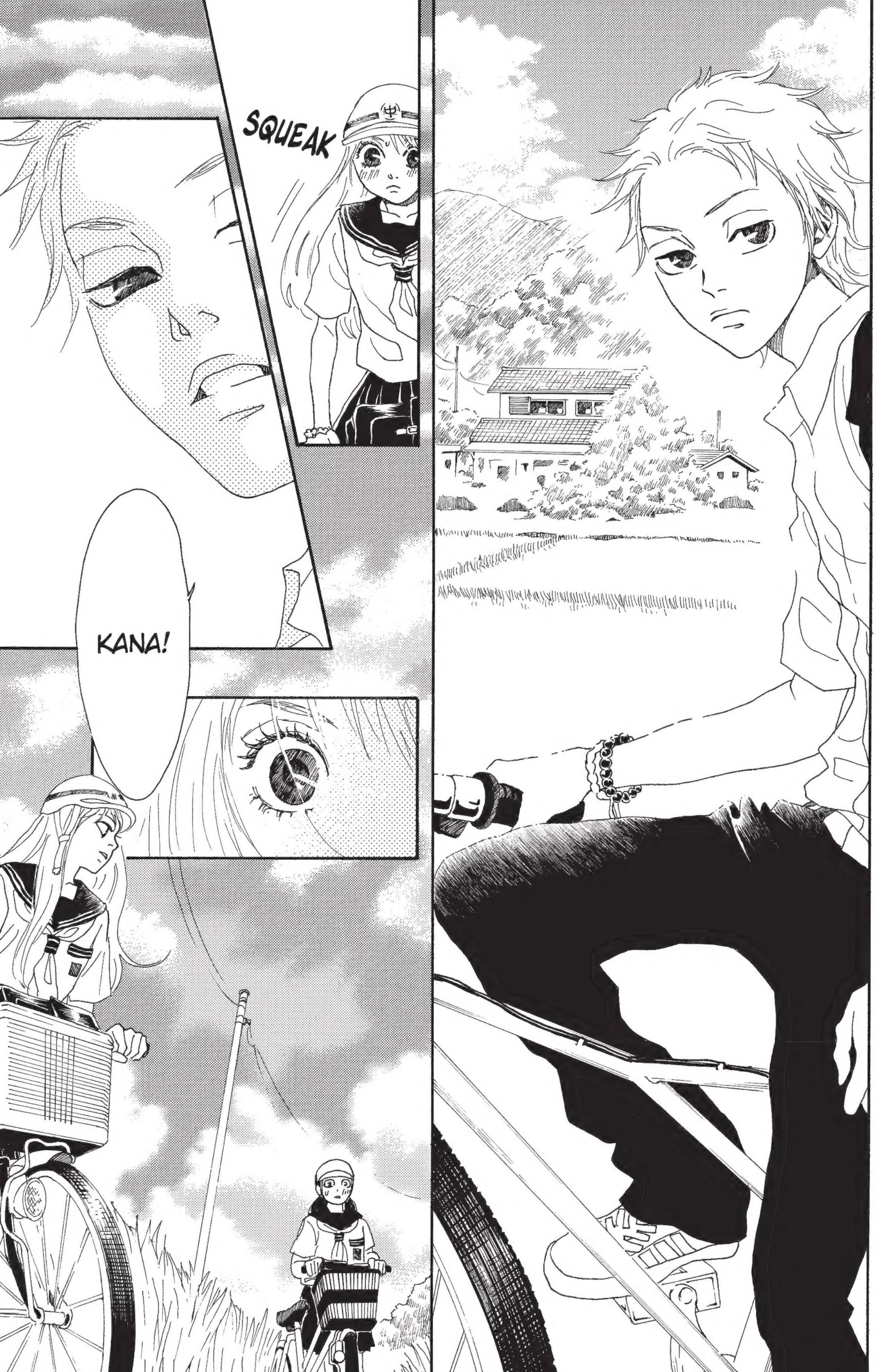
Gloom

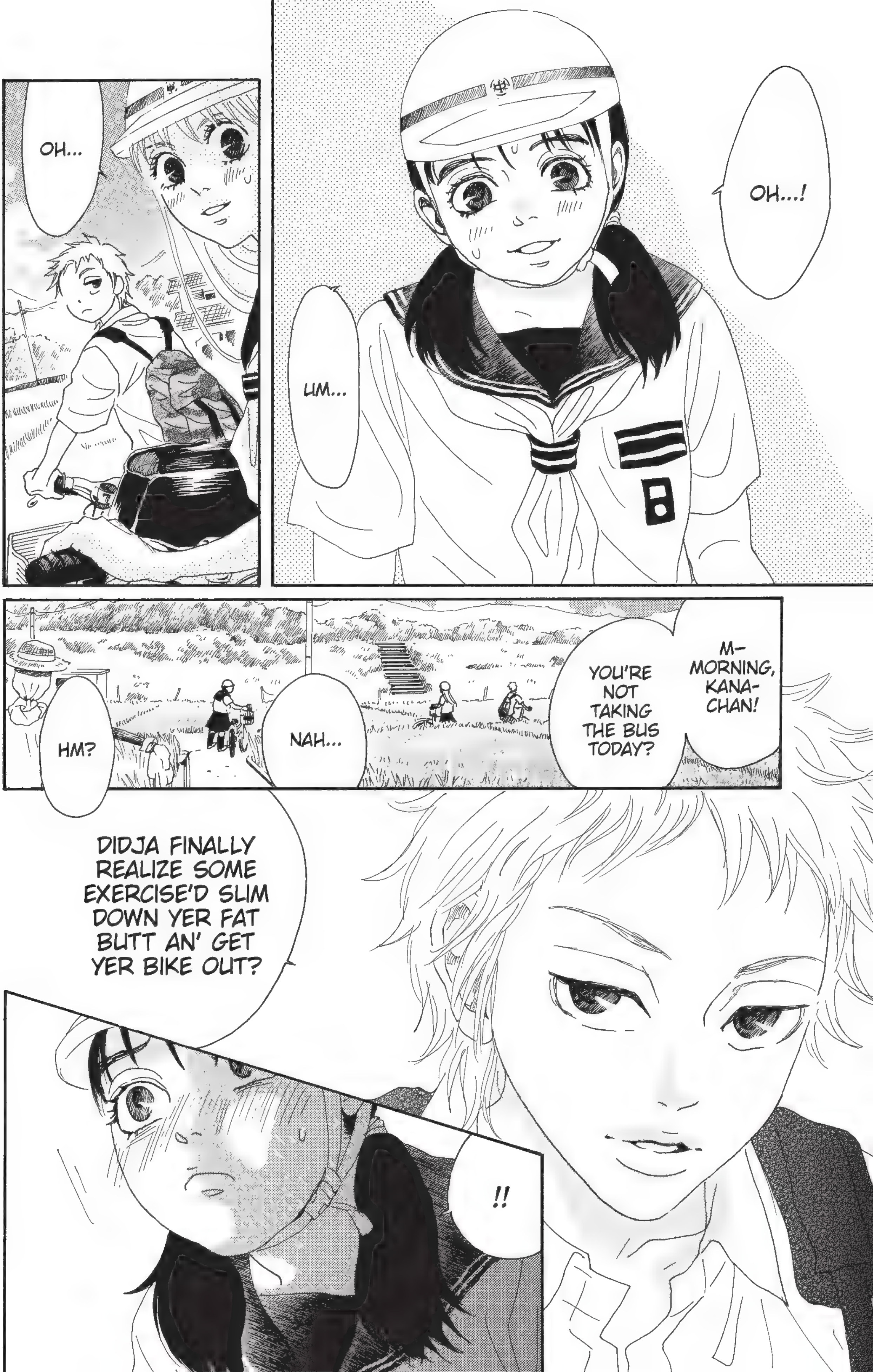


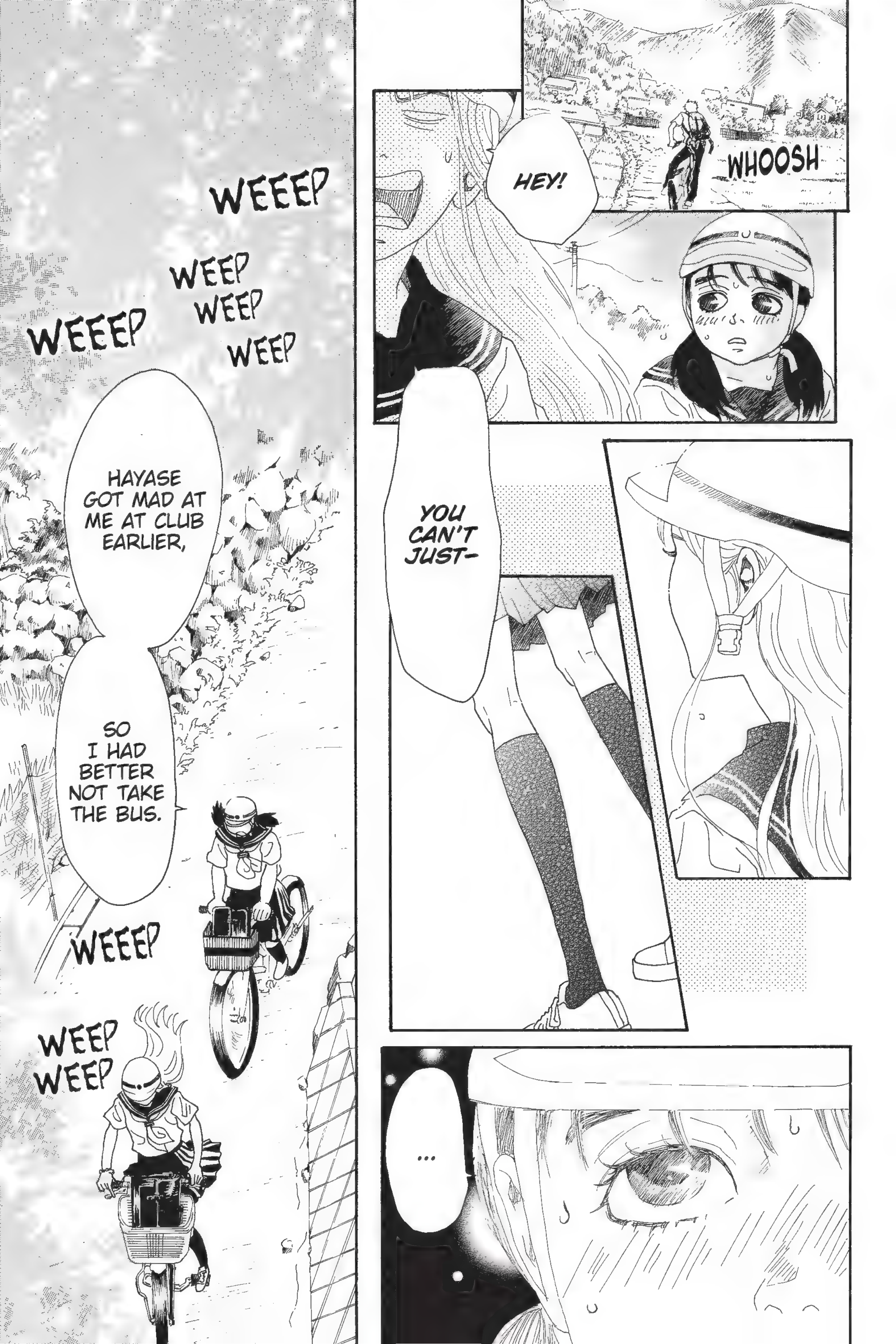


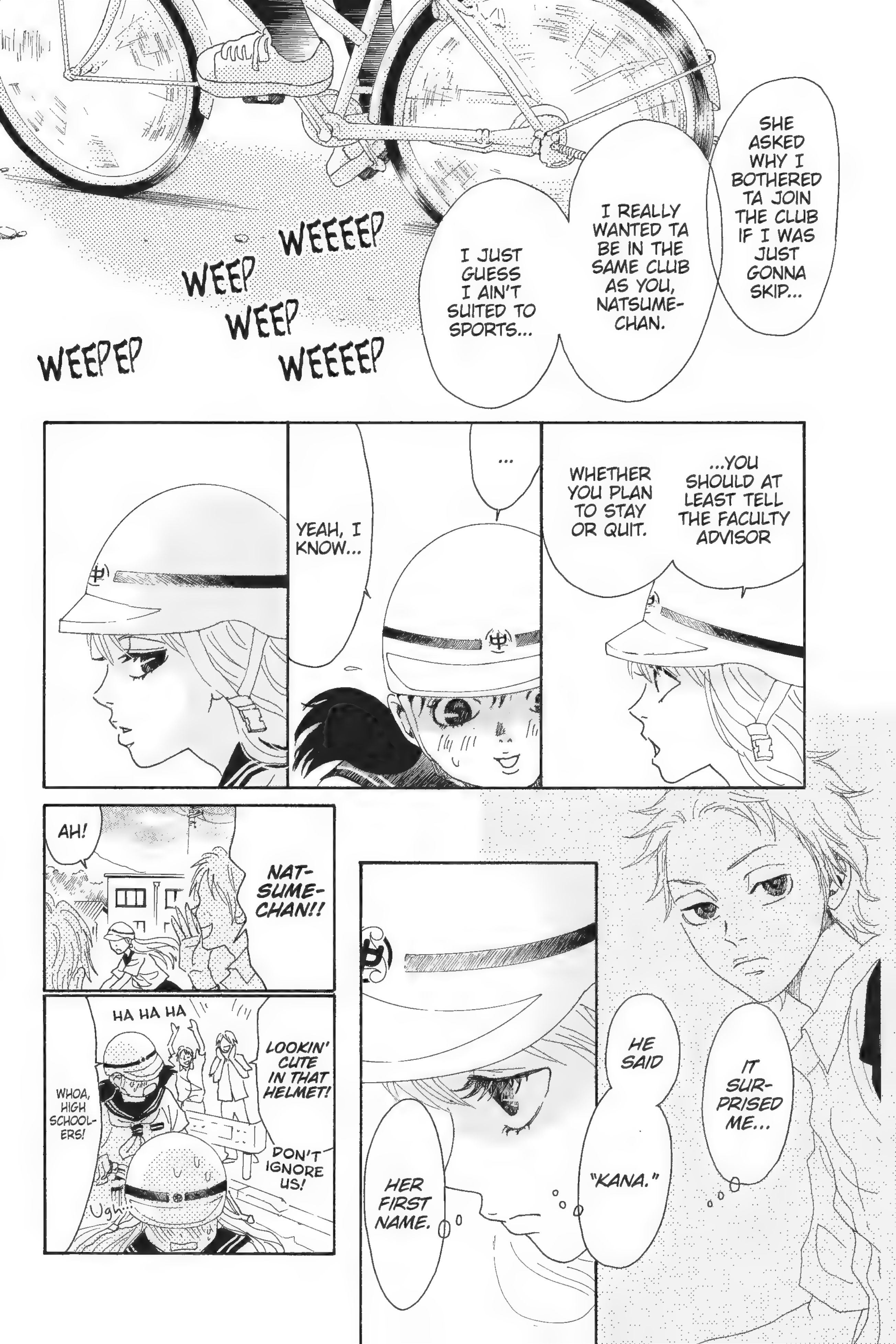

IF I HAVE KOU-CHAN... I DON'T NEED ANYTHING ELSE.
MORNING, KOU-CHAN!
民宿
お食事 ご休憩

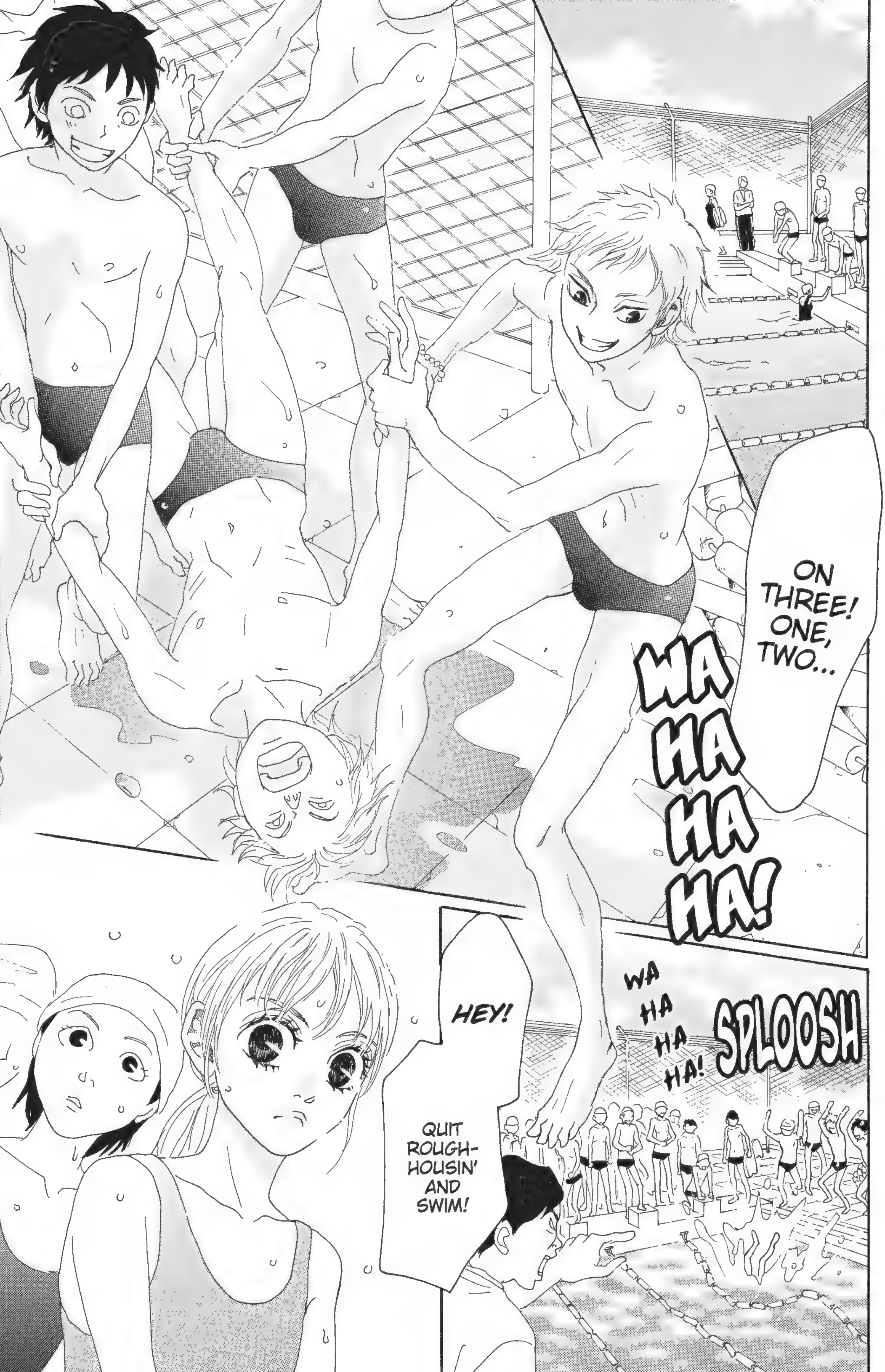

SUMMER BREAK IS COMING UP SOON!
REEEEE
YEAH...
REE REE
LET'S HANG OUT WHEN YOU'RE NOT BUSY WITH CLUB!
YEAH ...
REEEEE REE REE
...ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?
YEAH ...
...
YOU'VE BEEN PRETTY *DISTANT* SINCE WE *KISSED!*
SQUEAL
ARE YOU *SHY?*

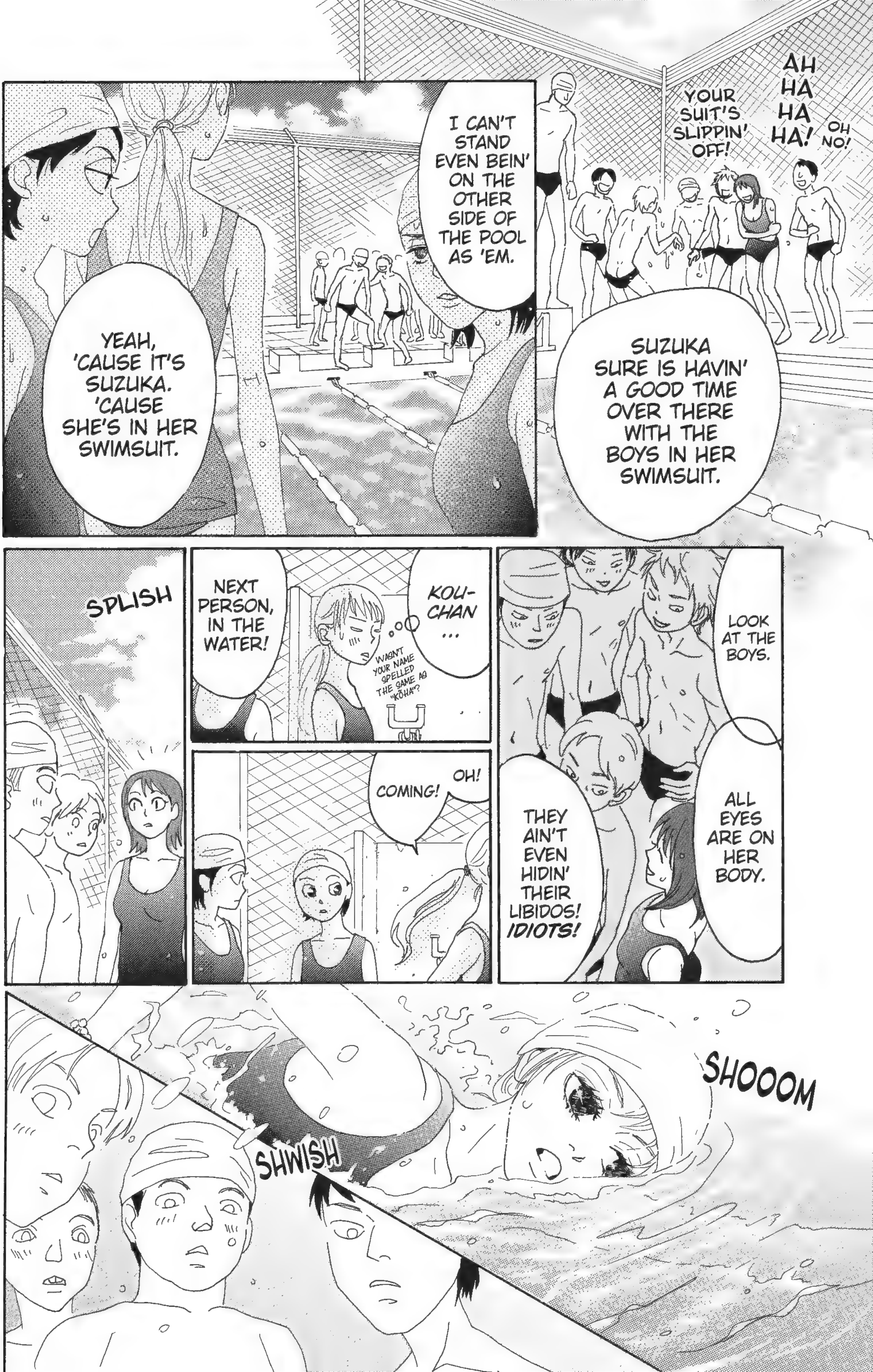

SQUEAK
KANA!

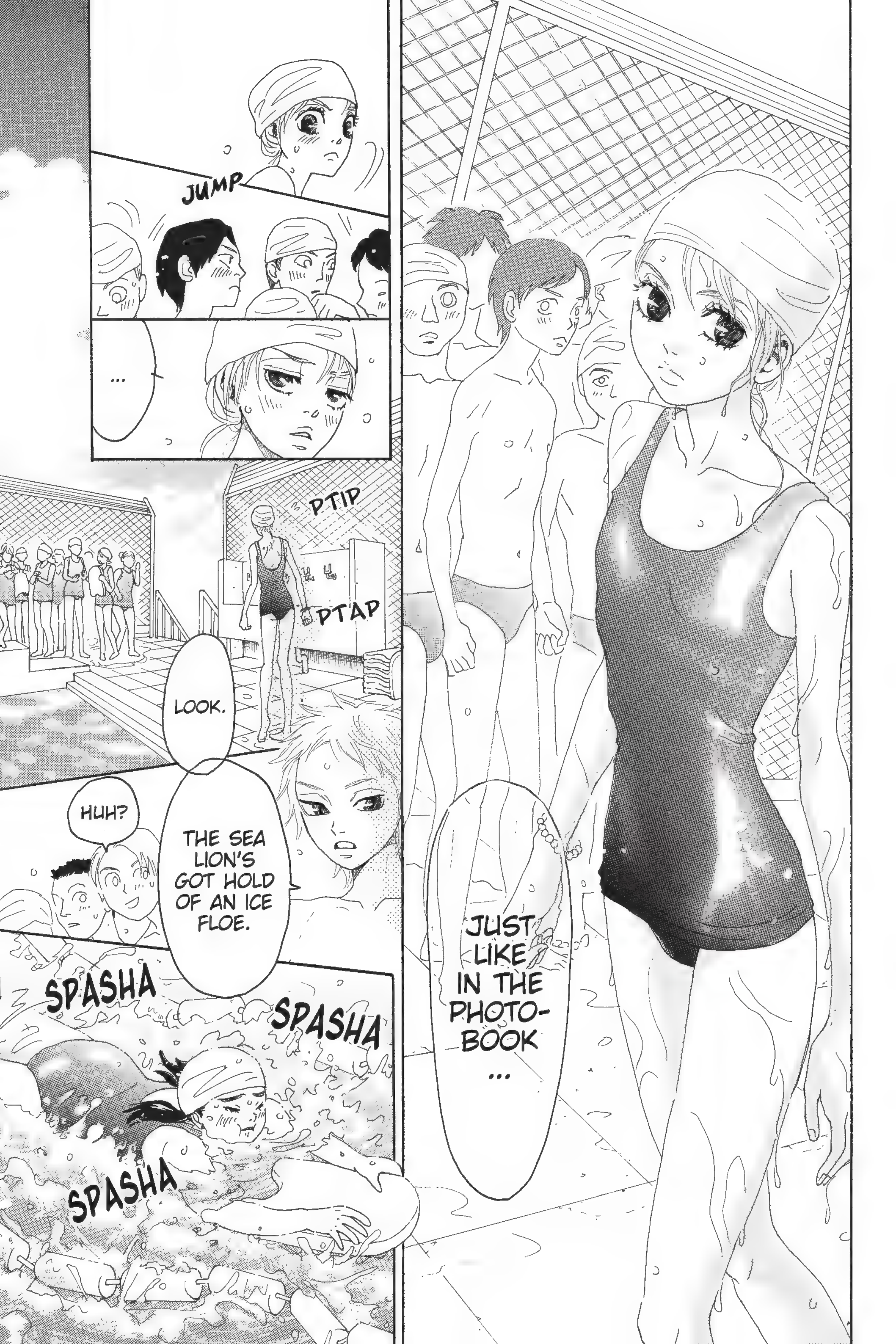

OH...!
UM...
OH...
M-MORNING, KANA-CHAN!
YOU'RE NOT TAKING THE BUS TODAY?
NAH...
HM?
DIDJA FINALLY REALIZE SOME EXERCISE'D SLIM DOWN YER FAT BUTT AN' GET YER BIKE OUT?
!!

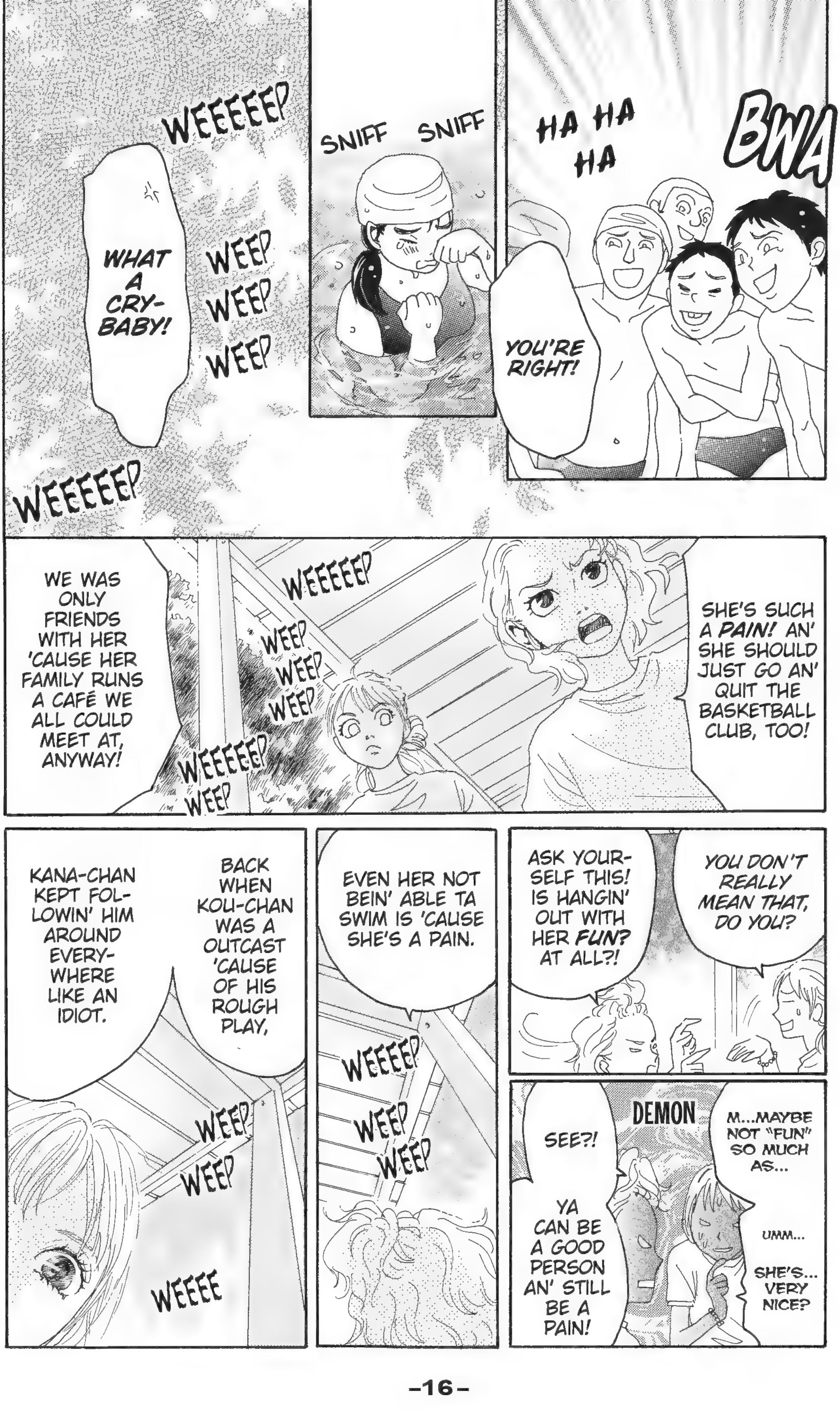

WHOOSH
HEY!
YOU CAN'T JUST-
...
WEEEP
WEEP
WEEP
WEEEP
WEEP
HAYASE GOT MAD AT ME AT CLUB EARLIER,
SO I HAD BETTER NOT TAKE THE BUS.
WEEEP
WEEP WEEP

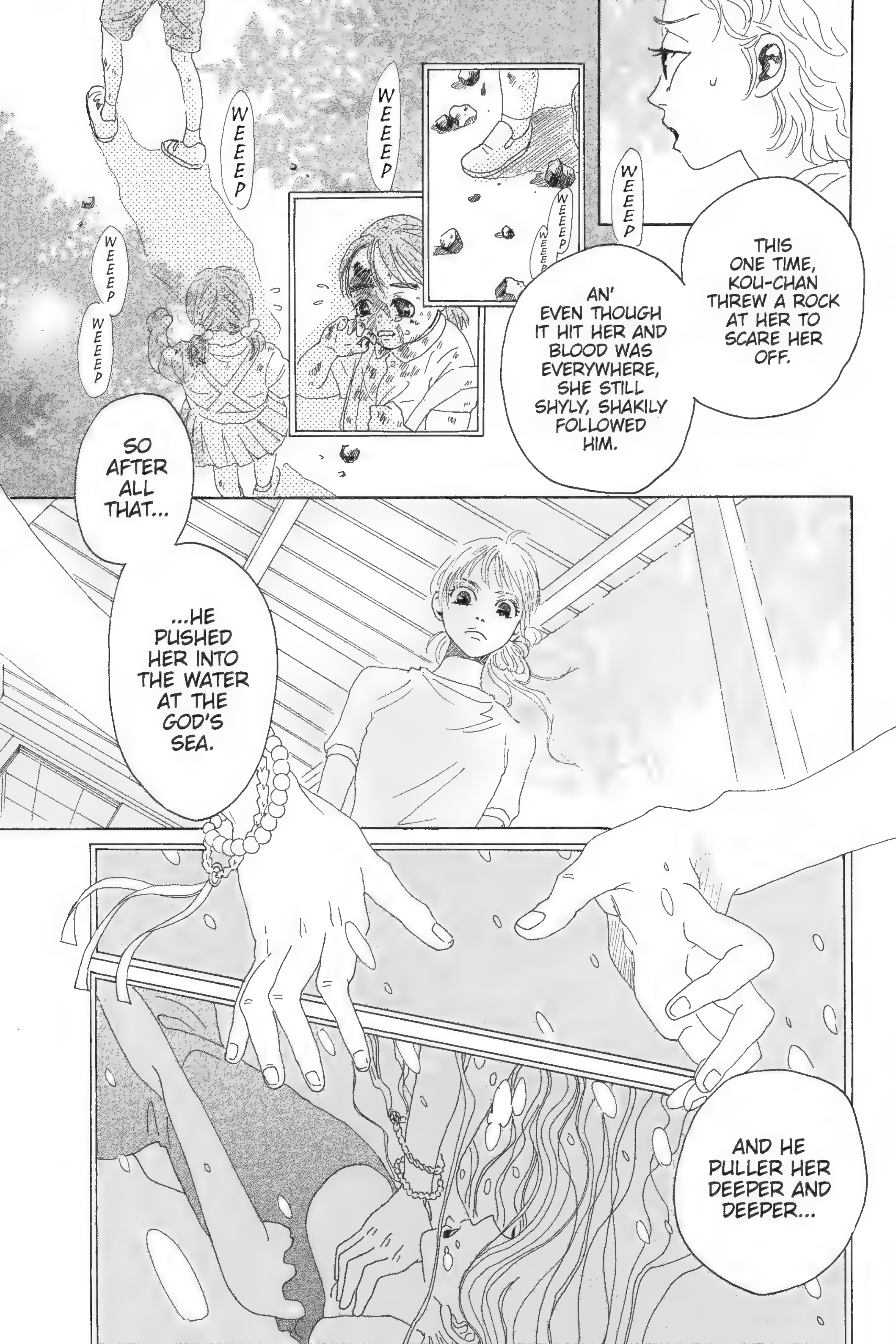

SHE ASKED WHY I BOTHERED TA JOIN THE CLUB IF I WAS JUST GONNA SKIP...
I REALLY WANTED TA BE IN THE SAME CLUB AS YOU, NATSUME-CHAN.
I JUST GUESS I AIN'T SUITED TO SPORTS...
WEEEEEP
WEEP
WEEP
WEEEEP
WEEPEP
...YOU SHOULD AT LEAST TELL THE FACULTY ADVISOR
WHETHER YOU PLAN TO STAY OR QUIT.
...
YEAH, I KNOW...
IT SURPRISED ME...
HE SAID
"KANA."
HER FIRST NAME.
AH!
NATSUME-CHAN!!
HA HA HA
LOOKIN' CUTE IN THAT HELMET!
WHOA, HIGH SCHOOLERS!
DON'T IGNORE US!
Ugh...

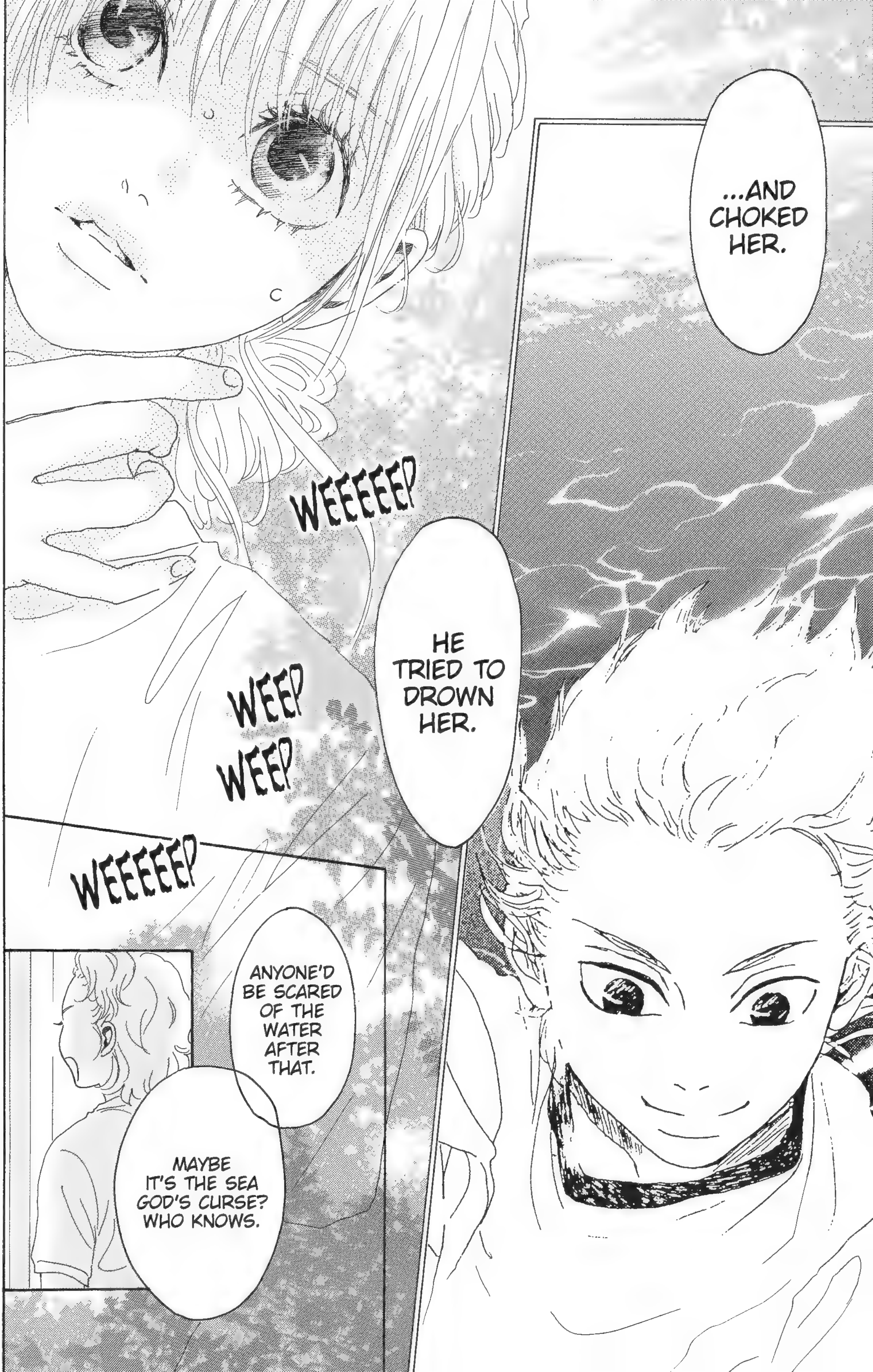

ON THREE! ONE, TWO...
WA HA HA HA HA!
SPLOOSH
WA HA HA HA!
HEY!
QUIT ROUGH-HOUSIN' AND SWIM!

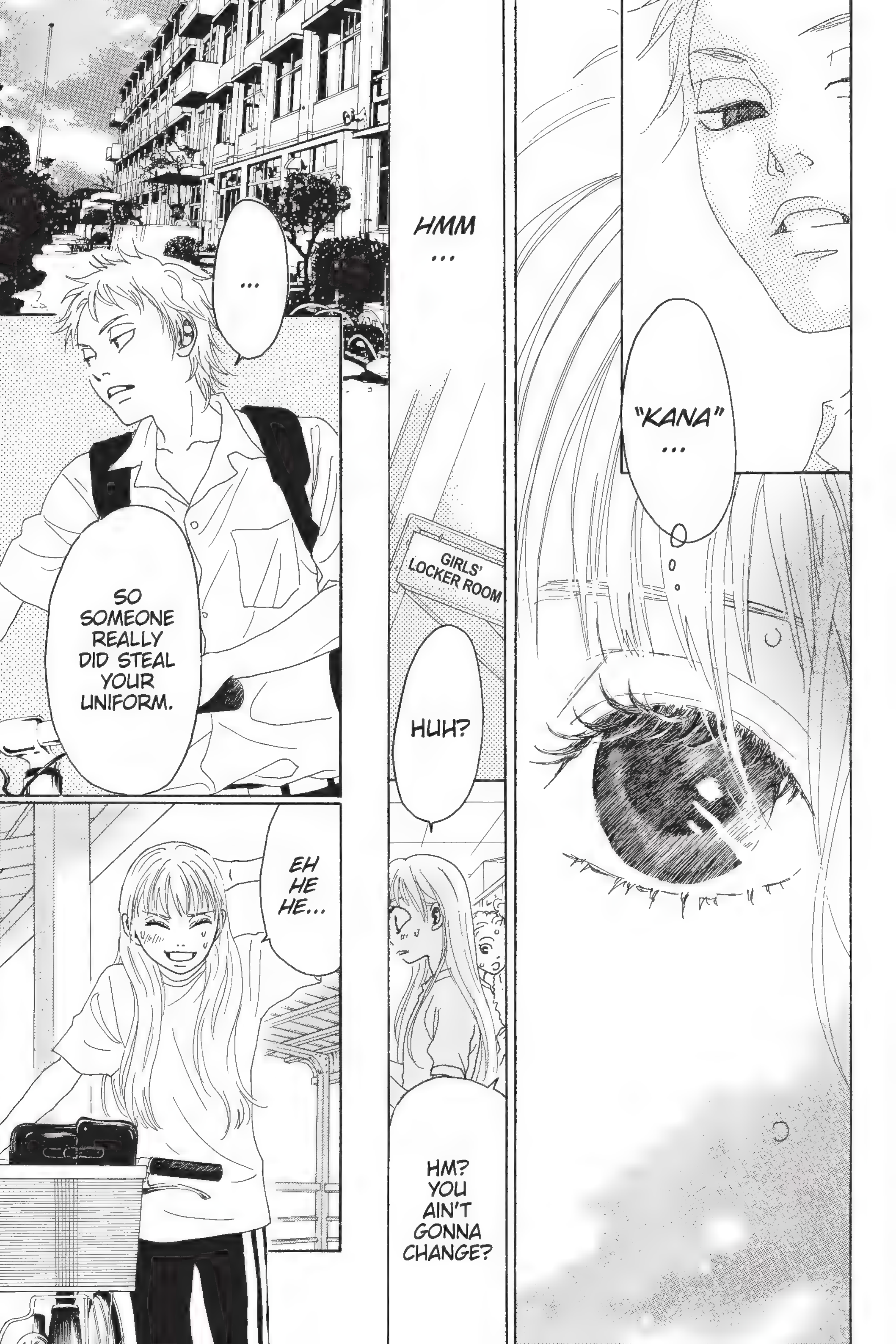

AH HA HA HA!
OH NO!
YOUR SUIT'S SLIPPIN' OFF!
SUZUKA SURE IS HAVIN' A GOOD TIME OVER THERE WITH THE BOYS IN HER SWIMSUIT.
I CAN'T STAND EVEN BEIN' ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POOL AS 'EM.
YEAH, 'CAUSE IT'S SUZUKA. 'CAUSE SHE'S IN HER SWIMSUIT.
LOOK AT THE BOYS.
ALL EYES ARE ON HER BODY.
THEY AIN'T EVEN HIDIN' THEIR LIBIDOS! *IDIOTS!*
KOU-CHAN ...
NEXT PERSON, IN THE WATER!
WASN'T YOUR NAME SPELLED THE SAME AS "KŌHA"?
OH!
COMING!
SPLISH
SHOOOM
SHWISH

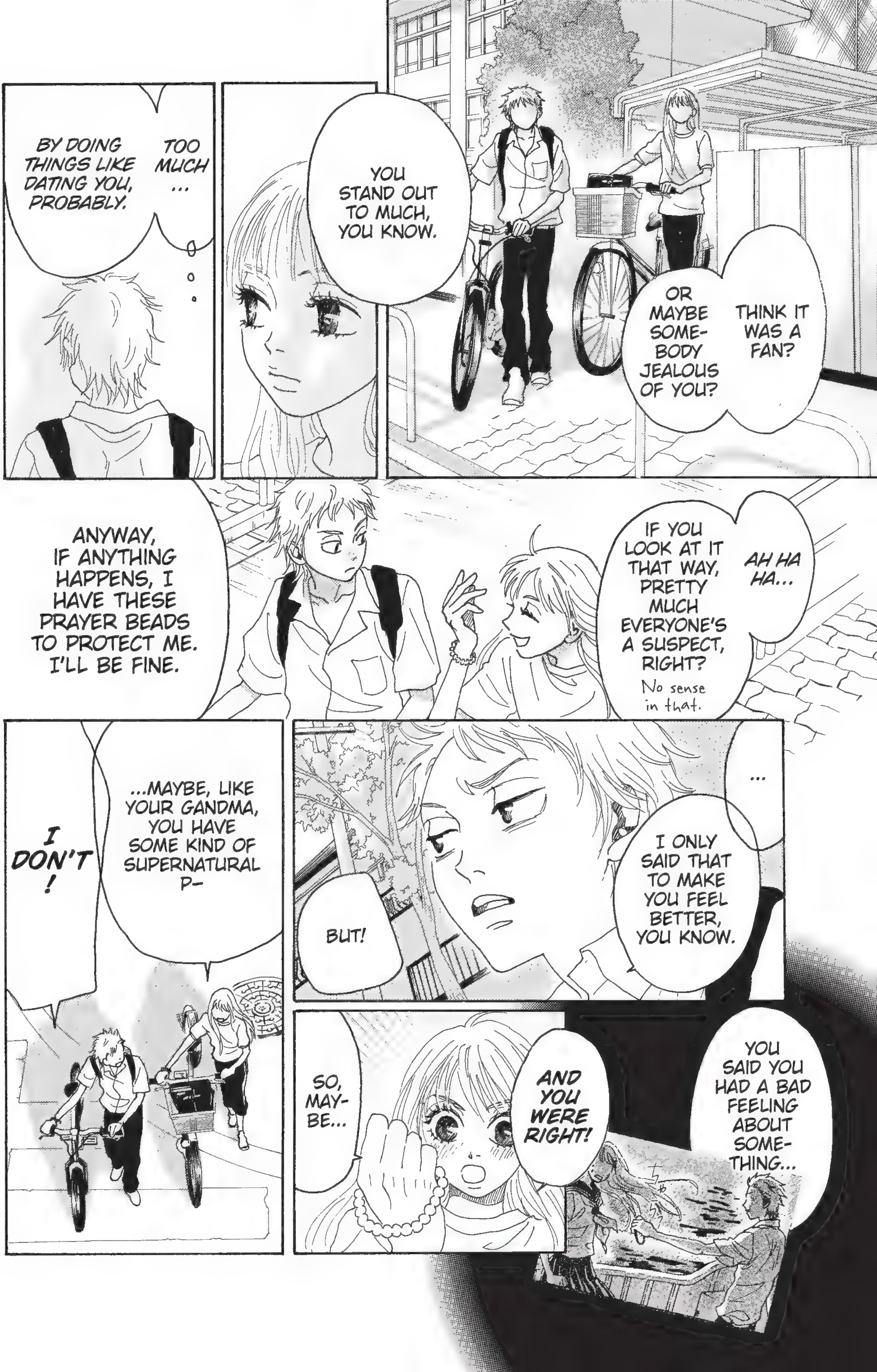

JUST LIKE IN THE PHOTO-BOOK ...
JUMP
...
PTIP
PTAP
LOOK.
THE SEA LION'S GOT HOLD OF AN ICE FLOE.
HUH?
SPASHA
SPASHA
SPASHA

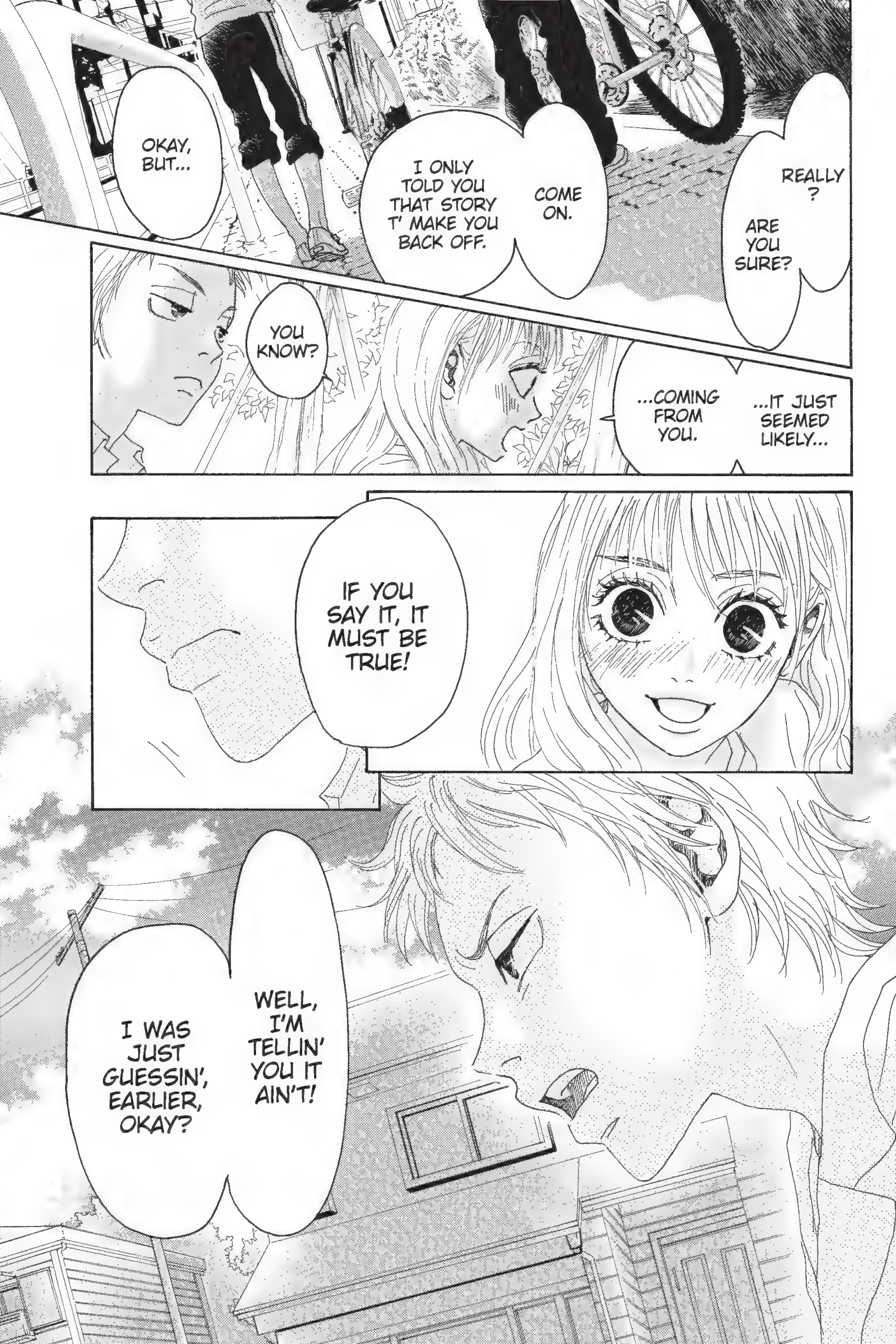

BWA
HA HA HA
SNIFF SNIFF
WEEEEEP
WHAT A CRY-BABY!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
WEEP WEEP WEEP
WEEEEEP
SHE'S SUCH A *PAIN!* AN' SHE SHOULD JUST GO AN' QUIT THE BASKETBALL CLUB, TOO!
WEEEEEP
WEEP WEEP WEEP
WE WAS ONLY FRIENDS WITH HER 'CAUSE HER FAMILY RUNS A CAFÉ WE ALL COULD MEET AT, ANYWAY!
WEEEEEP WEEP
YOU DON'T REALLY MEAN THAT, DO YOU?
ASK YOURSELF THIS! IS HANGIN' OUT WITH HER *FUN?* AT ALL?!
M...MAYBE NOT "FUN" SO MUCH AS...
DEMON
SEE?!
UMM...
SHE'S... VERY NICE?
YA CAN BE A GOOD PERSON AN' STILL BE A PAIN!
EVEN HER NOT BEIN' ABLE TA SWIM IS 'CAUSE SHE'S A PAIN.
WEEEEP
WEEP WEEP
BACK WHEN KOU-CHAN WAS A OUTCAST 'CAUSE OF HIS ROUGH PLAY,
KANA-CHAN KEPT FOLLOWIN' HIM AROUND EVERYWHERE LIKE AN IDIOT.
WEEP WEEP
WEEEE

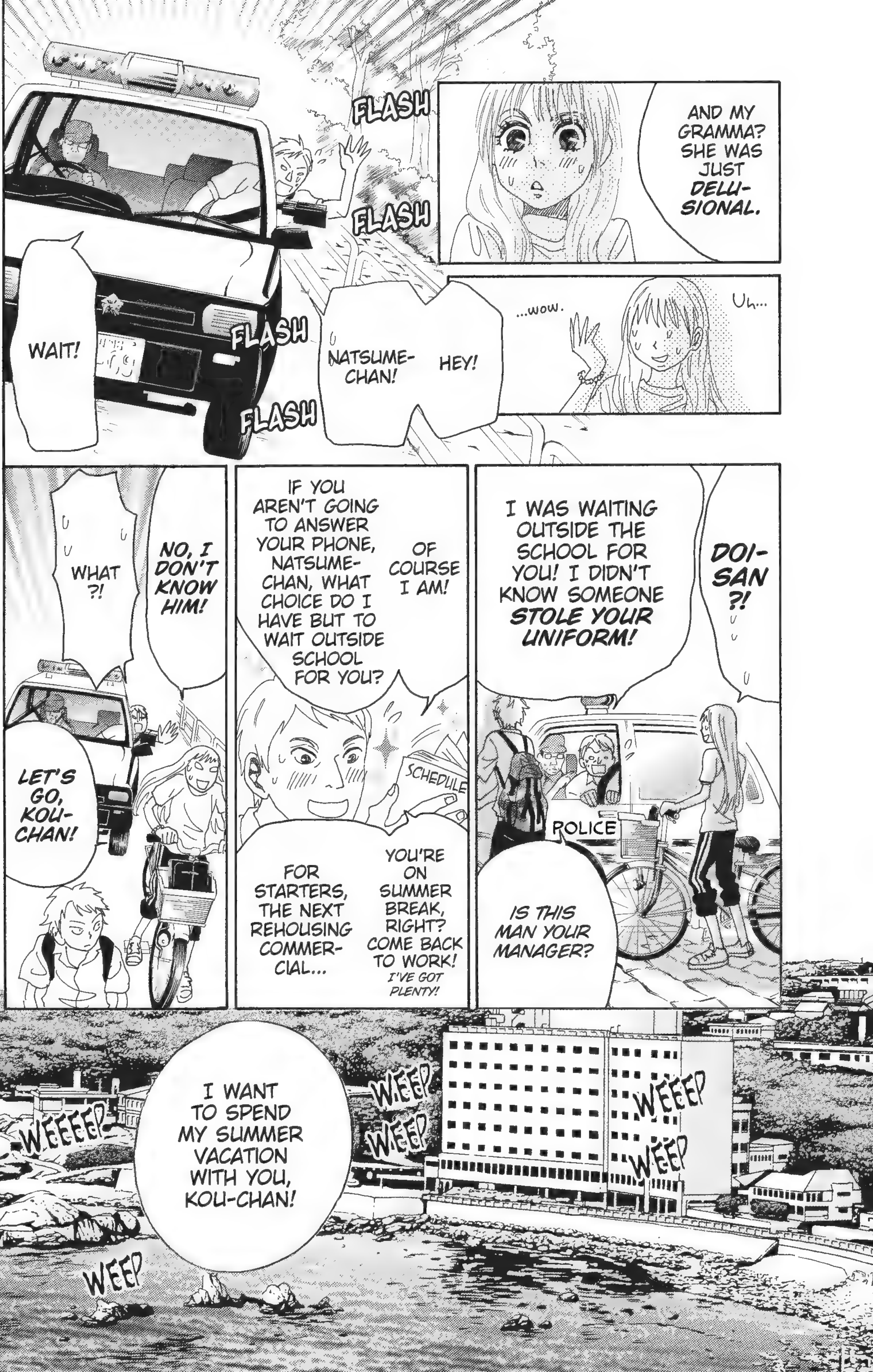

WEEEP
THIS ONE TIME, KOU-CHAN THREW A ROCK AT HER TO SCARE HER OFF.
AN' EVEN THOUGH IT HIT HER AND BLOOD WAS EVERYWHERE, SHE STILL SHYLY, SHAKILY FOLLOWED HIM.
WEEEP
WEEEP
WEEEP
WEEEP
WEEEP
WEEEP
SO AFTER ALL THAT...
...HE PUSHED HER INTO THE WATER AT THE GOD'S SEA.
AND HE PULLER HER DEEPER AND DEEPER...

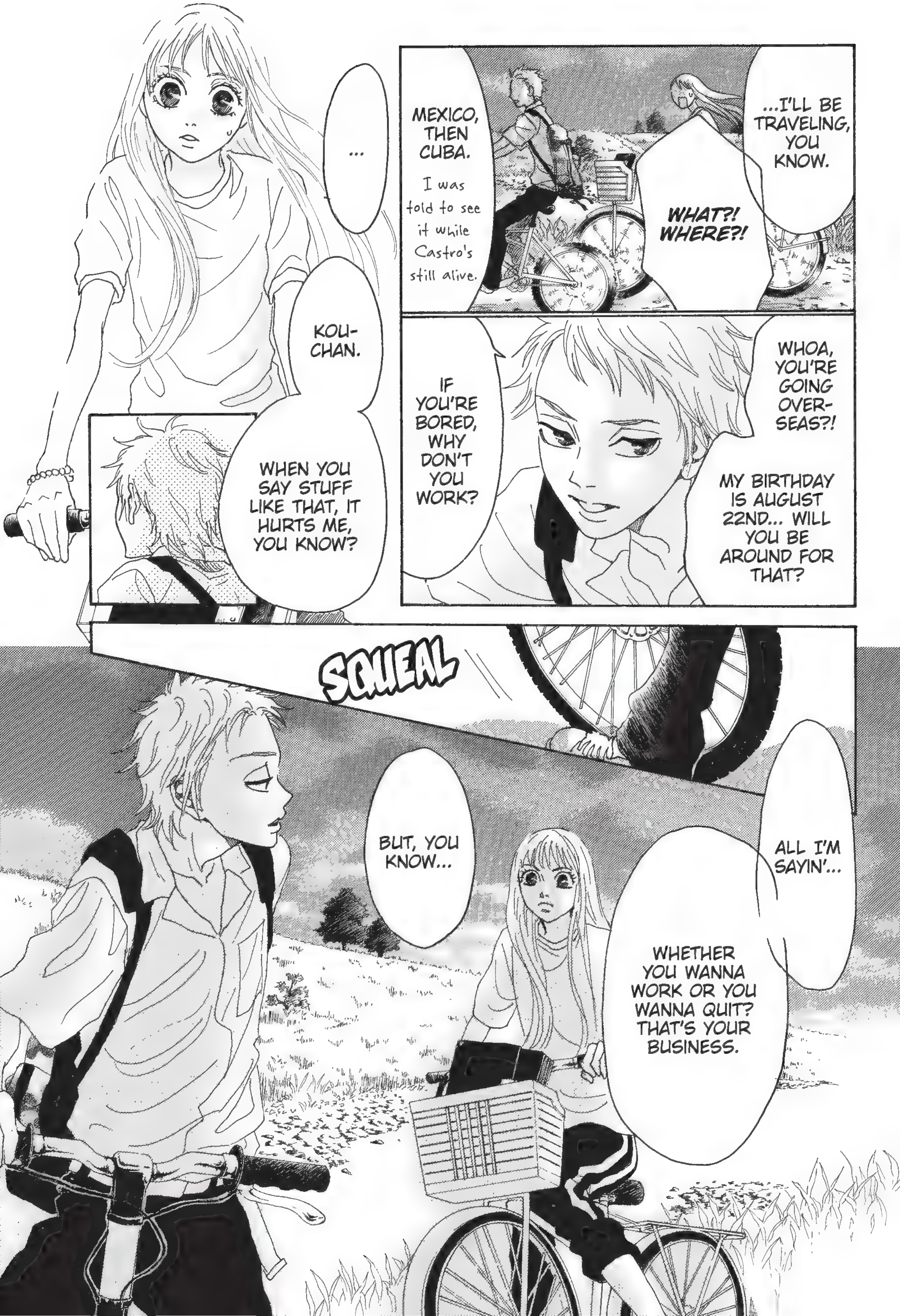

...AND CHOKED HER.
HE TRIED TO DROWN HER.
WEEEEEP
WEEP WEEP
WEEEEEP
ANYONE'D BE SCARED OF THE WATER AFTER THAT.
MAYBE IT'S THE SEA GOD'S CURSE? WHO KNOWS.

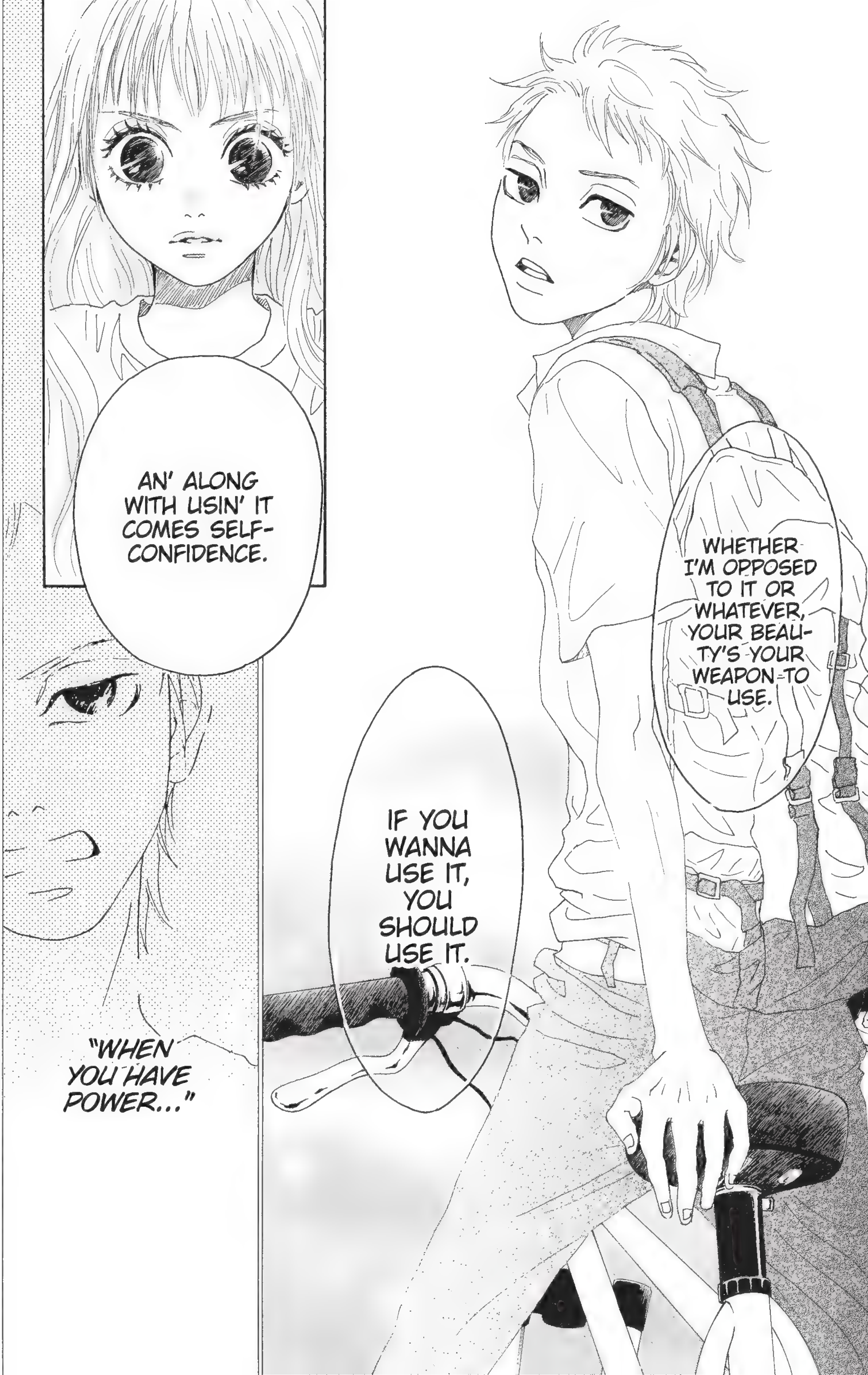

"KANA" ...
HMM ...
GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM
HUH?
HM? YOU AIN'T GONNA CHANGE?
...
SO SOMEONE REALLY DID STEAL YOUR UNIFORM.
EH HE HE...

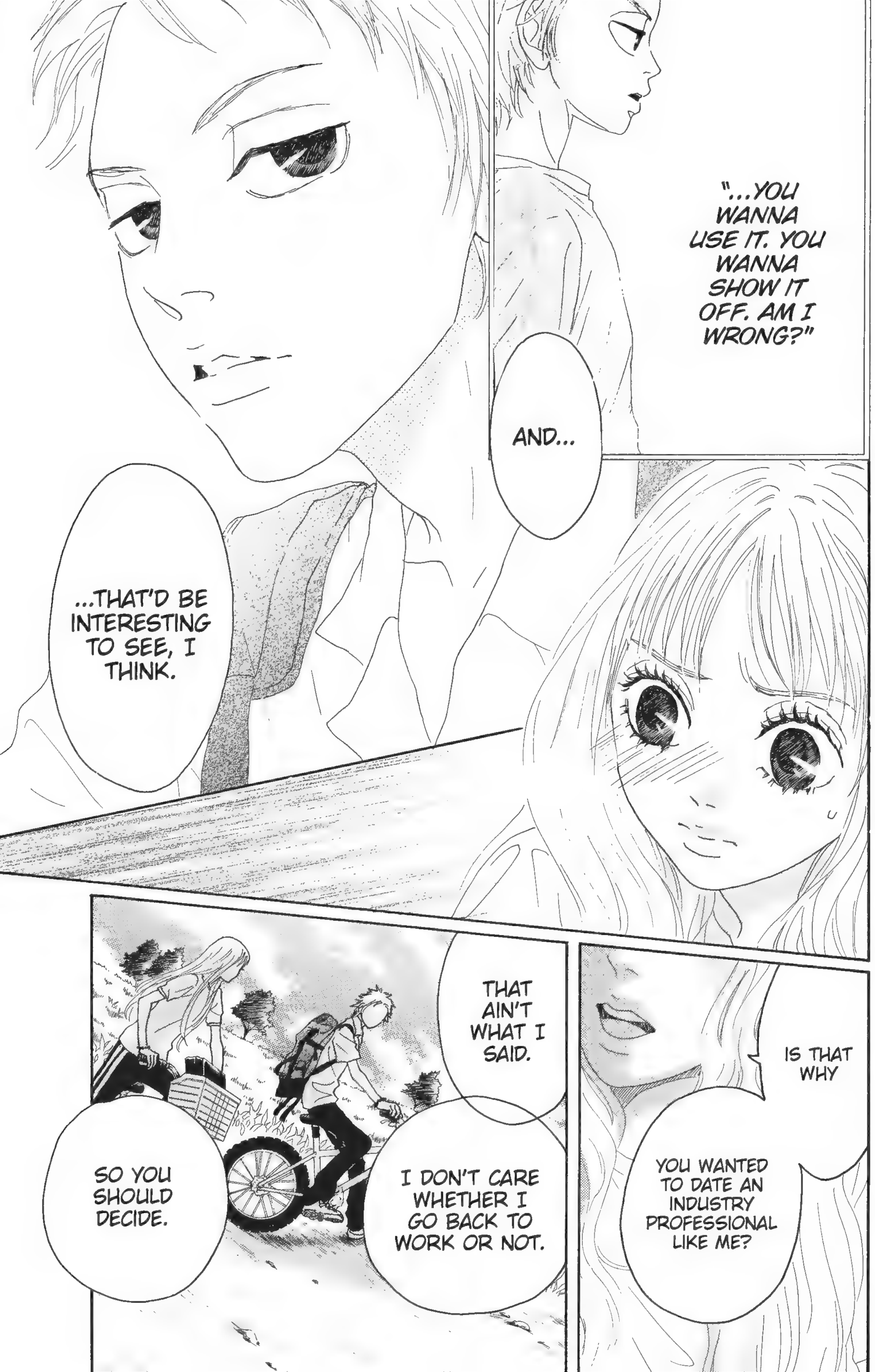

THINK IT WAS A FAN?
OR MAYBE SOMEBODY JEALOUS OF YOU?
YOU STAND OUT TO MUCH, YOU KNOW.
TOO MUCH ...
BY DOING THINGS LIKE DATING YOU, PROBABLY.
AH HA HA...
IF YOU LOOK AT IT THAT WAY, PRETTY MUCH EVERYONE'S A SUSPECT, RIGHT?
No sense in that.
ANYWAY, IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, I HAVE THESE PRAYER BEADS TO PROTECT ME. I'LL BE FINE.
...
I ONLY SAID THAT TO MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER, YOU KNOW.
BUT!
YOU SAID YOU HAD A BAD FEELING ABOUT SOMETHING...
AND YOU WERE RIGHT!
SO, MAYBE...
...MAYBE, LIKE YOUR GANDMA, YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF SUPERNATURAL P-
I DON'T!

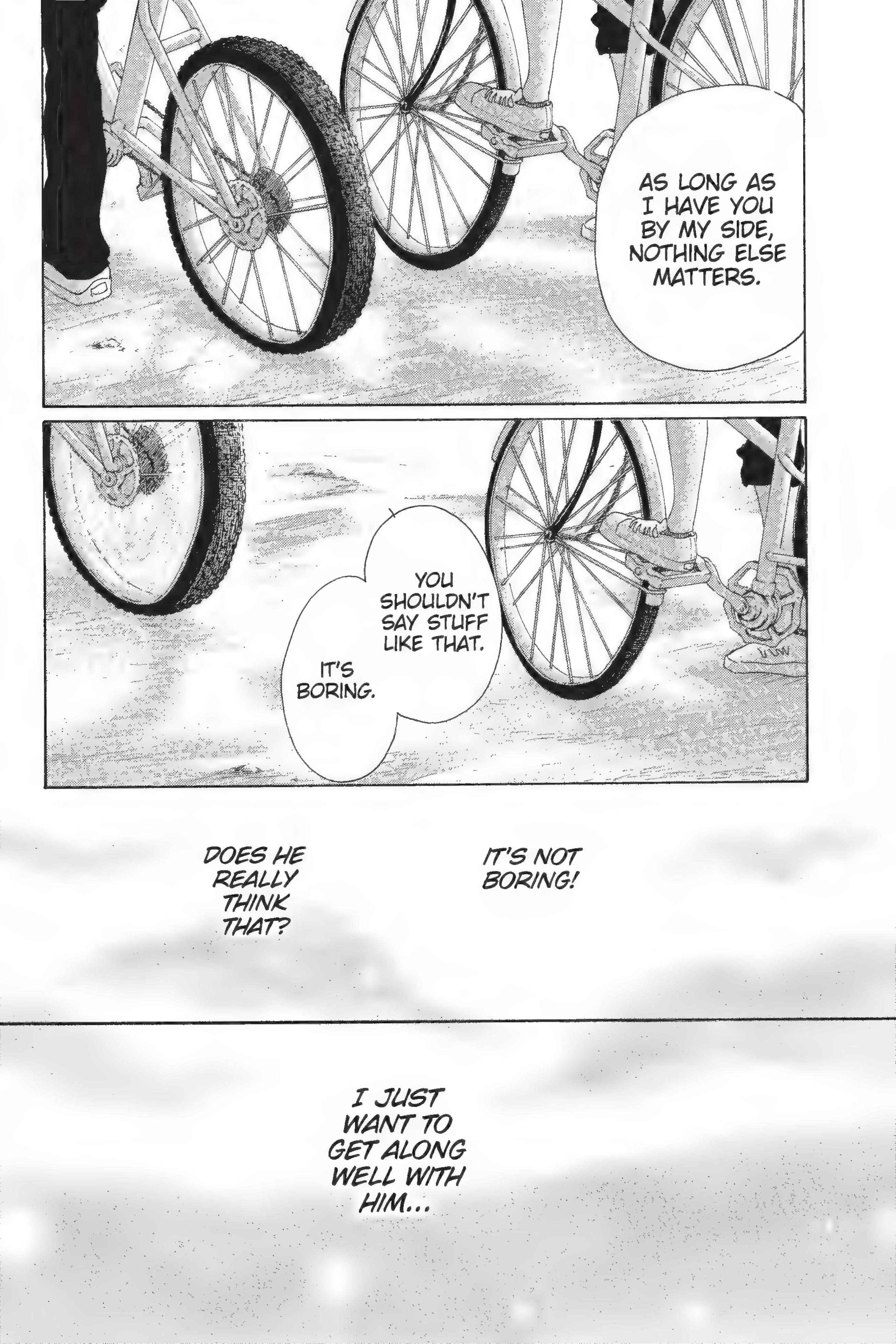

REALLY? ARE YOU SURE?
COME ON. I ONLY TOLD YOU THAT STORY T' MAKE YOU BACK OFF.
OKAY, BUT...
...IT JUST SEEMED LIKELY... ...COMING FROM YOU.
YOU KNOW?
IF YOU SAY IT, IT MUST BE TRUE!
WELL, I'M TELLIN' YOU IT AIN'T! I WAS JUST GUESSIN', EARLIER, OKAY?

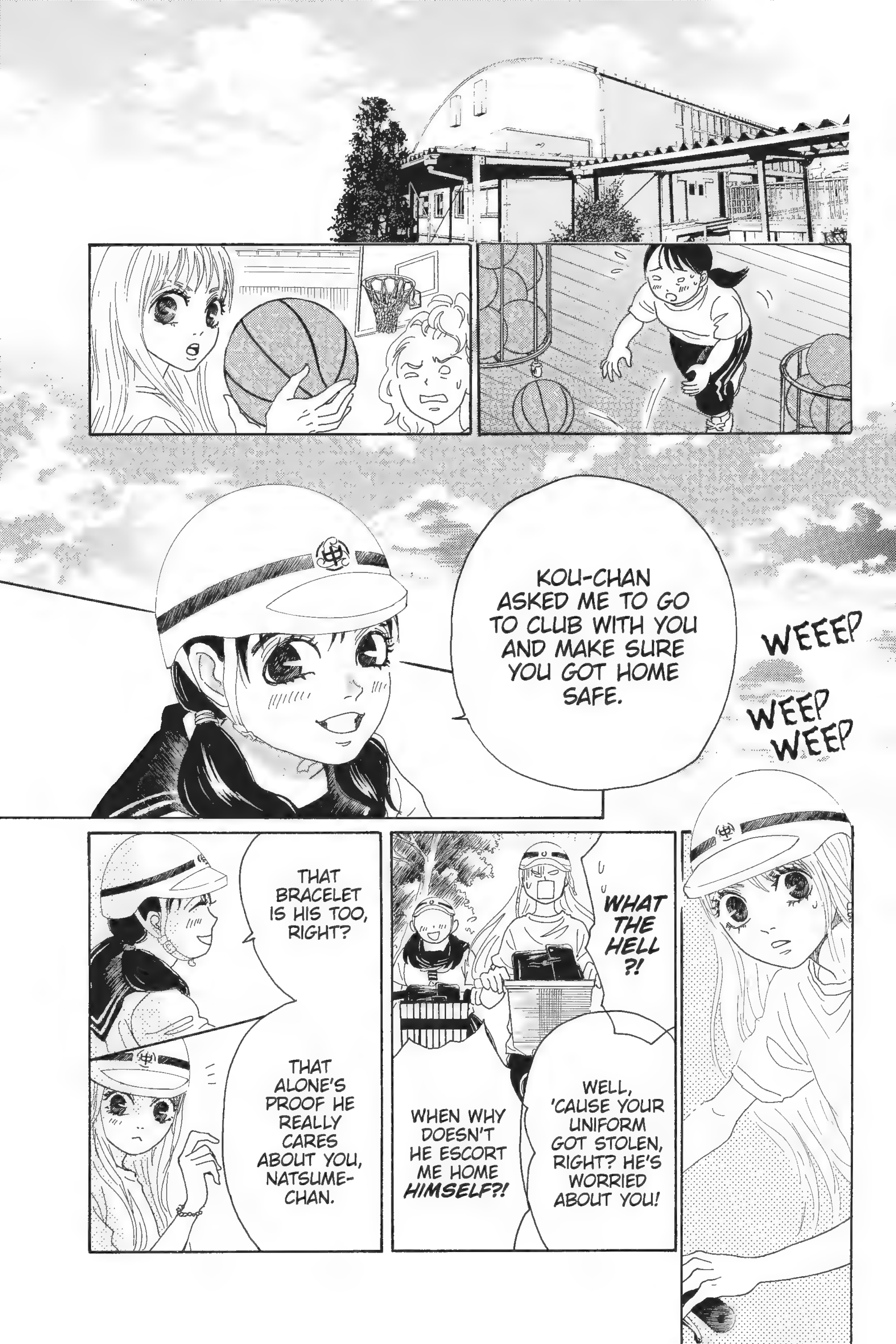

AND MY GRAMMA? SHE WAS JUST DELUSIONAL.
Uh...
...wow.
HEY!
NATSUME-CHAN!
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH
WAIT!
DOI-SAN?!
I WAS WAITING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL FOR YOU! I DIDN'T KNOW SOMEONE STOLE YOUR UNIFORM!
POLICE
IS THIS MAN YOUR MANAGER?
OF COURSE I AM!
IF YOU AREN'T GOING TO ANSWER YOUR PHONE, NATSUME-CHAN, WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE BUT TO WAIT OUTSIDE SCHOOL FOR YOU?
SCHEDULE
YOU'RE ON SUMMER BREAK, RIGHT? COME BACK TO WORK!
I'VE GOT PLENTY!
FOR STARTERS, THE NEXT REHOUSING COMMERCIAL...
NO, I DON'T KNOW HIM!
WHAT?!
LET'S GO, KOU-CHAN!
WEEEP
WEEP
WEEP
WEEP
I WANT TO SPEND MY SUMMER VACATION WITH YOU, KOU-CHAN!
WEEEEP
WEEP

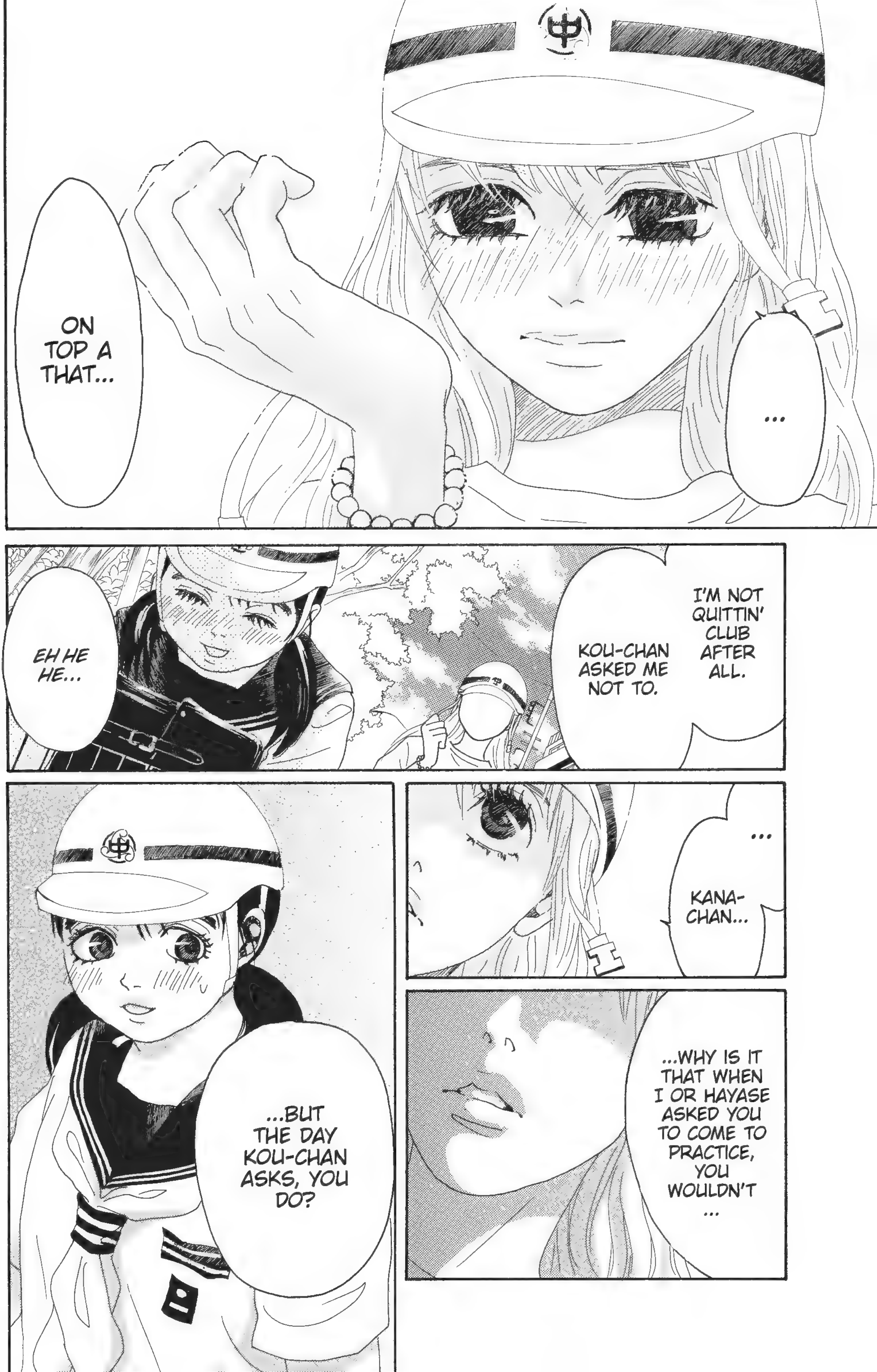

...I'LL BE TRAVELING, YOU KNOW.
WHAT?! WHERE?!
MEXICO, THEN CUBA.
I was told to see it while Castro's still alive.
WHOA, YOU'RE GOING OVERSEAS?!
MY BIRTHDAY IS AUGUST 22ND... WILL YOU BE AROUND FOR THAT?
IF YOU'RE BORED, WHY DON'T YOU WORK?
...
KOU-CHAN.
WHEN YOU SAY STUFF LIKE THAT, IT HURTS ME, YOU KNOW?
SQUEAL
ALL I'M SAYIN'...
WHETHER YOU WANNA WORK OR YOU WANNA QUIT? THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS.
BUT, YOU KNOW...

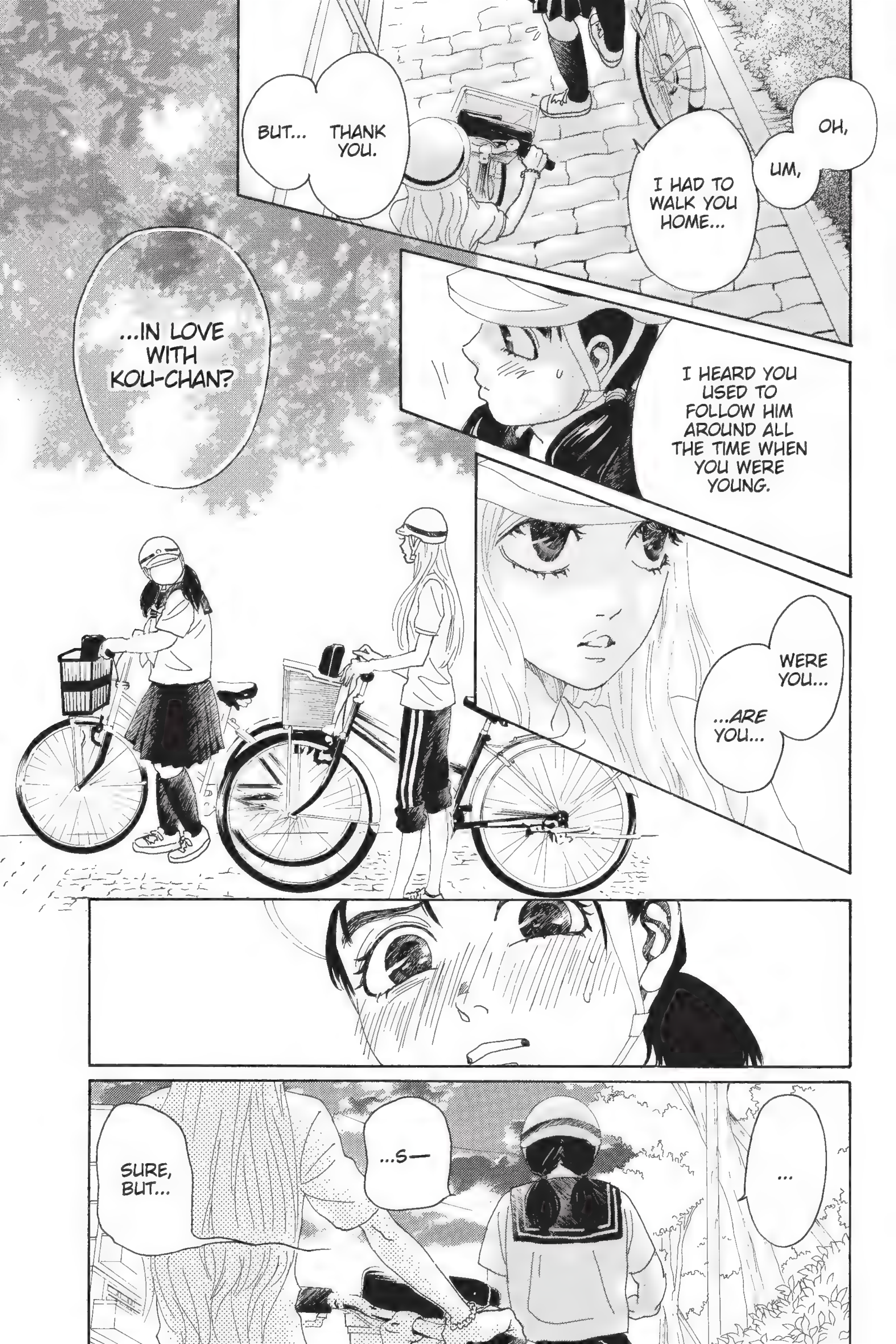

WHETHER I'M OPPOSED TO IT OR WHATEVER, YOUR BEAUTY'S YOUR WEAPON TO USE.
IF YOU WANNA USE IT, YOU SHOULD USE IT.
AN' ALONG WITH USIN' IT COMES SELF-CONFIDENCE.
"WHEN YOU HAVE POWER..."

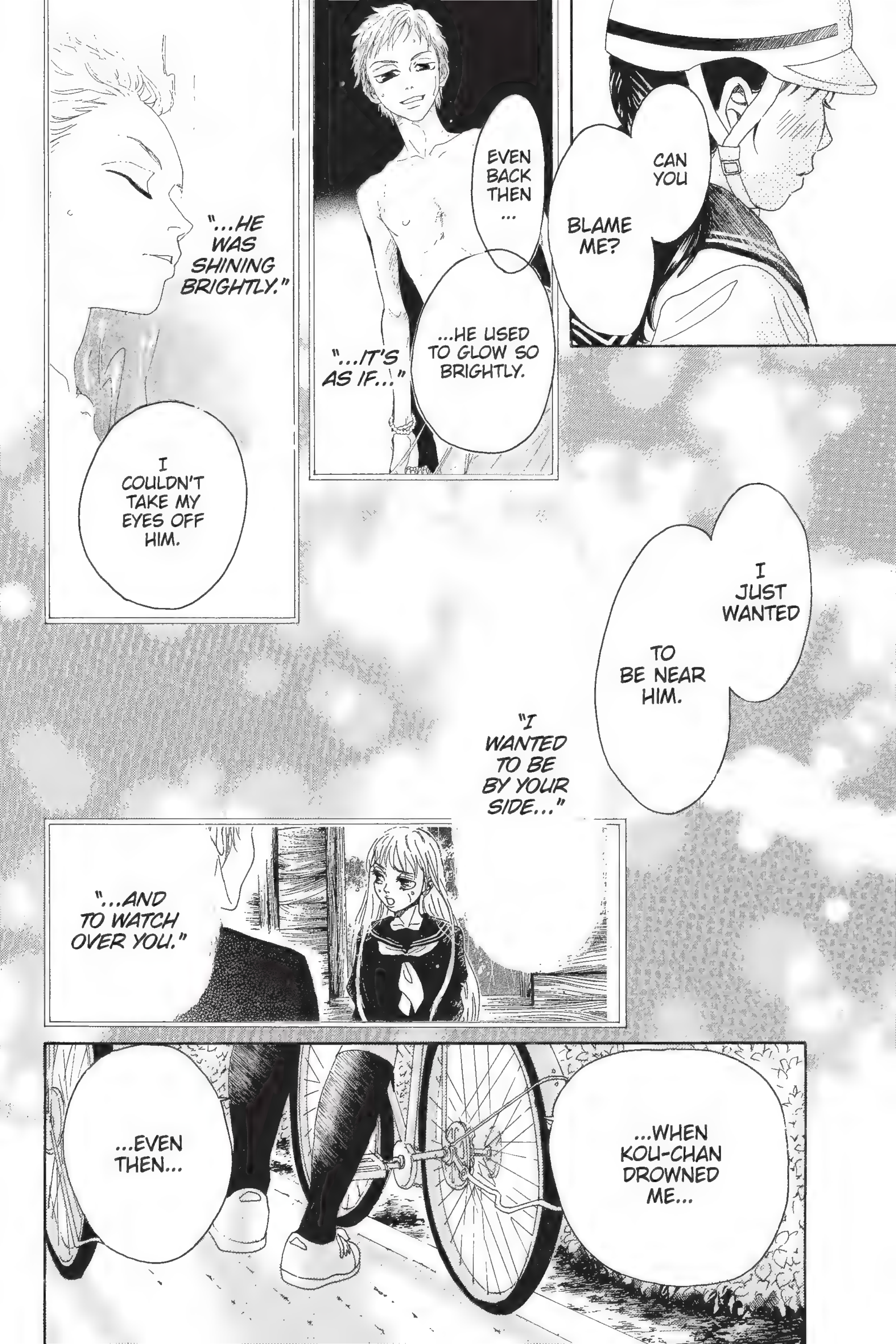

"...YOU WANNA USE IT. YOU WANNA SHOW IT OFF. AM I WRONG?"
AND...
...THAT'D BE INTERESTING TO SEE, I THINK.
IS THAT WHY
YOU WANTED TO DATE AN INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL LIKE ME?
THAT AIN'T WHAT I SAID.
I DON'T CARE WHETHER I GO BACK TO WORK OR NOT.
SO YOU SHOULD DECIDE.

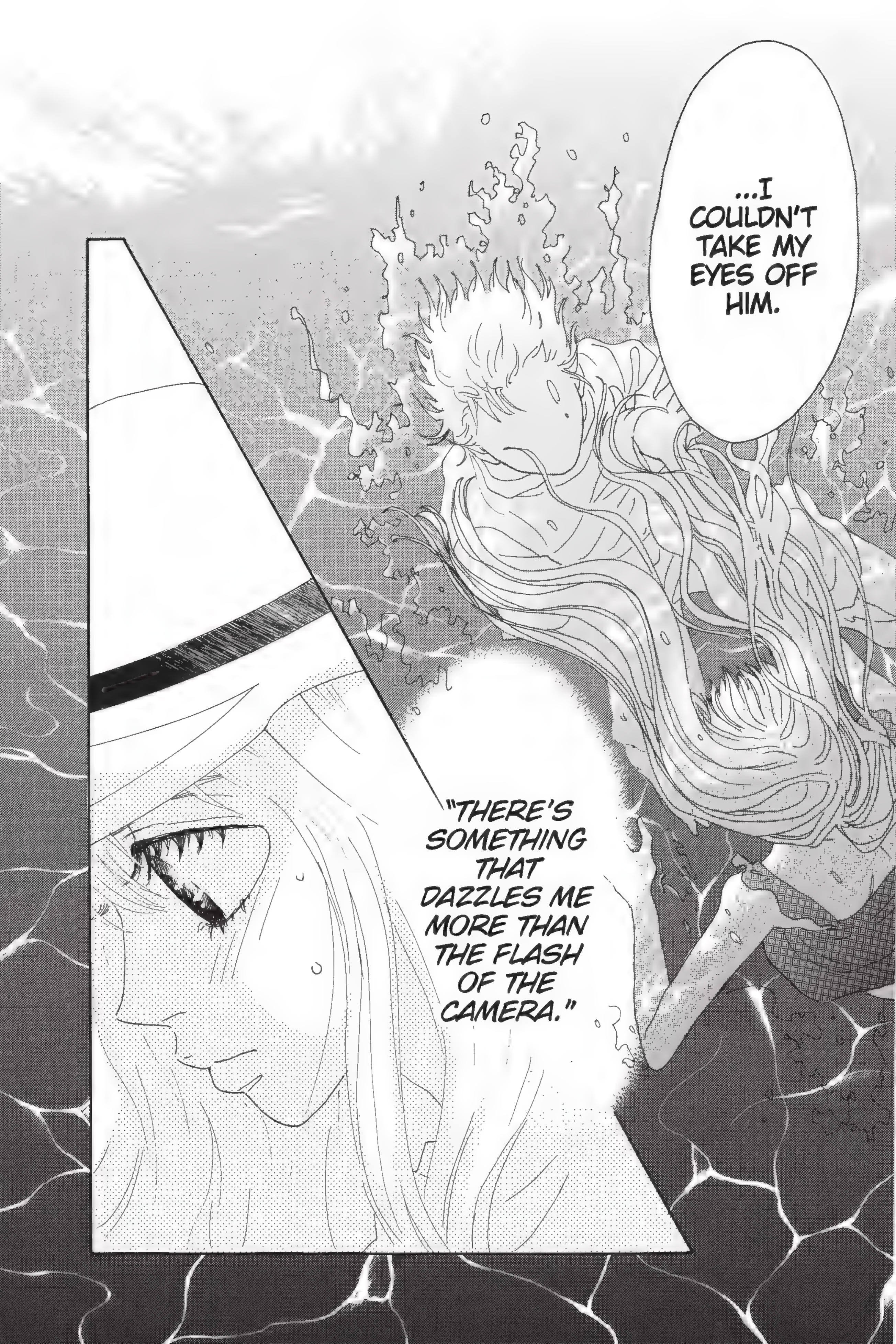

AS LONG AS I HAVE YOU BY MY SIDE, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.
YOU SHOULDN'T SAY STUFF LIKE THAT.
IT'S BORING.
IT'S NOT BORING!
DOES HE REALLY THINK THAT?
I JUST WANT TO GET ALONG WELL WITH HIM...

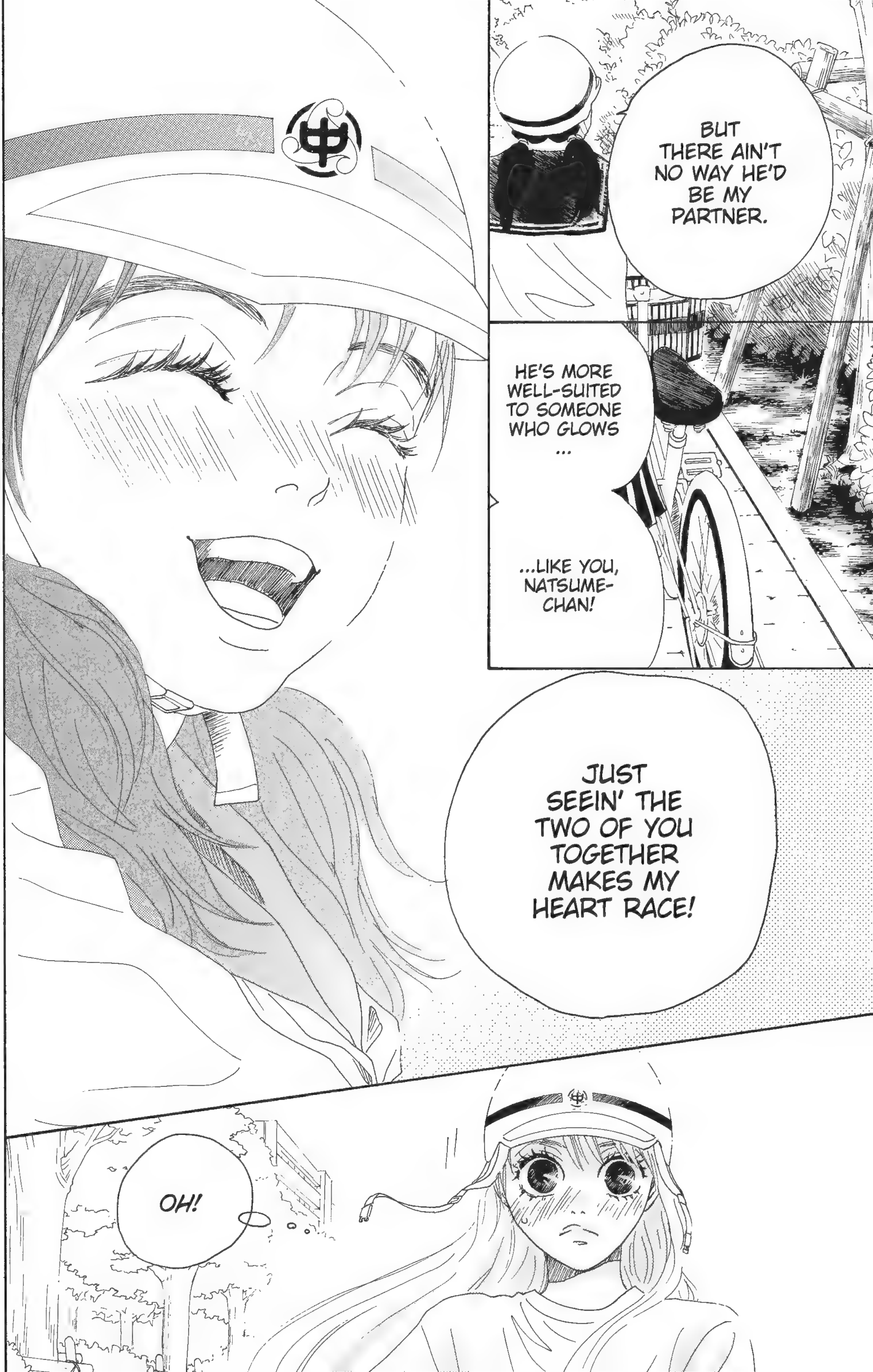

WEEEP
WEEP WEEP
KOU-CHAN ASKED ME TO GO TO CLUB WITH YOU AND MAKE SURE YOU GOT HOME SAFE.
WELL, 'CAUSE YOUR UNIFORM GOT STOLEN, RIGHT? HE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU!
WHAT THE HELL?!
WHEN WHY DOESN'T HE ESCORT ME HOME *HIMSELF?!*
THAT BRACELET IS HIS TOO, RIGHT?
THAT ALONE'S PROOF HE REALLY CARES ABOUT YOU, NATSUME-CHAN.

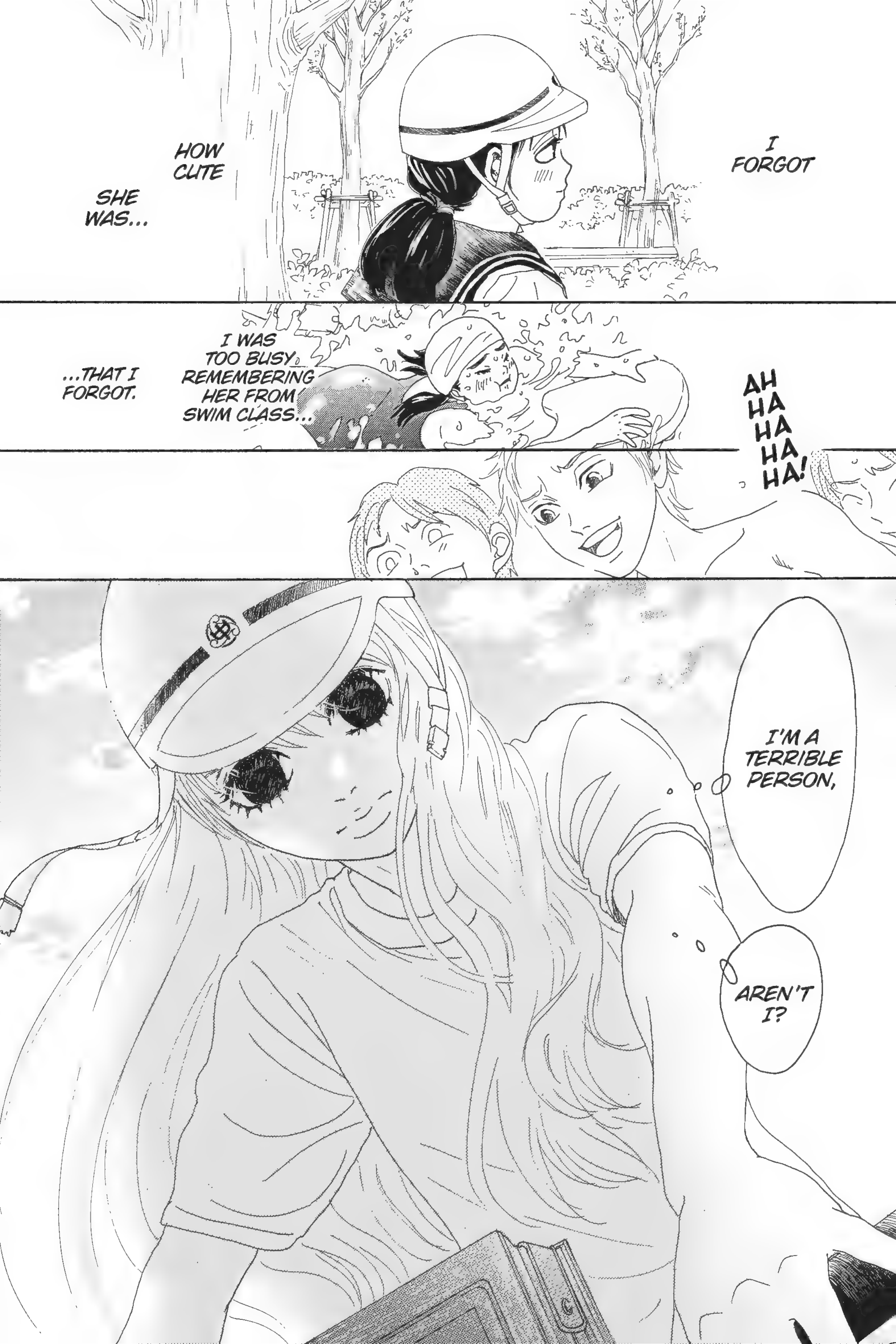

...
ON TOP A THAT...
I'M NOT QUITTIN' CLUB AFTER ALL.
KOU-CHAN ASKED ME NOT TO.
EH HE HE...
... KANA-CHAN...
...WHY IS IT THAT WHEN I OR HAYASE ASKED YOU TO COME TO PRACTICE, YOU WOULDN'T ...
...BUT THE DAY KOU-CHAN ASKS, YOU DO?

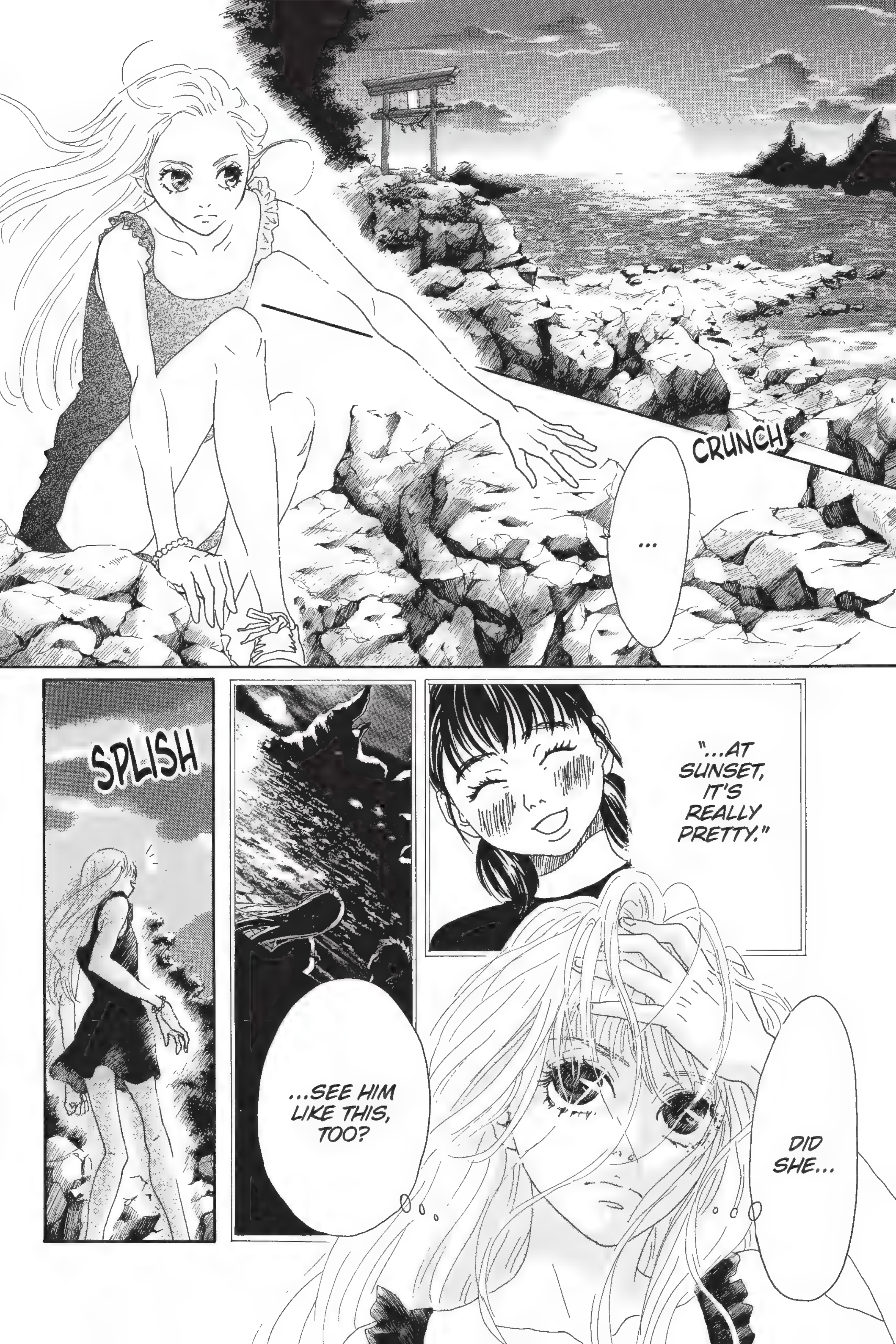

OH,
UM,
I HAD TO WALK YOU HOME...
BUT... THANK YOU.
I HEARD YOU USED TO FOLLOW HIM AROUND ALL THE TIME WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG.
WERE YOU...
...ARE YOU...
...IN LOVE WITH KOU-CHAN?
...
...S—
SURE, BUT...

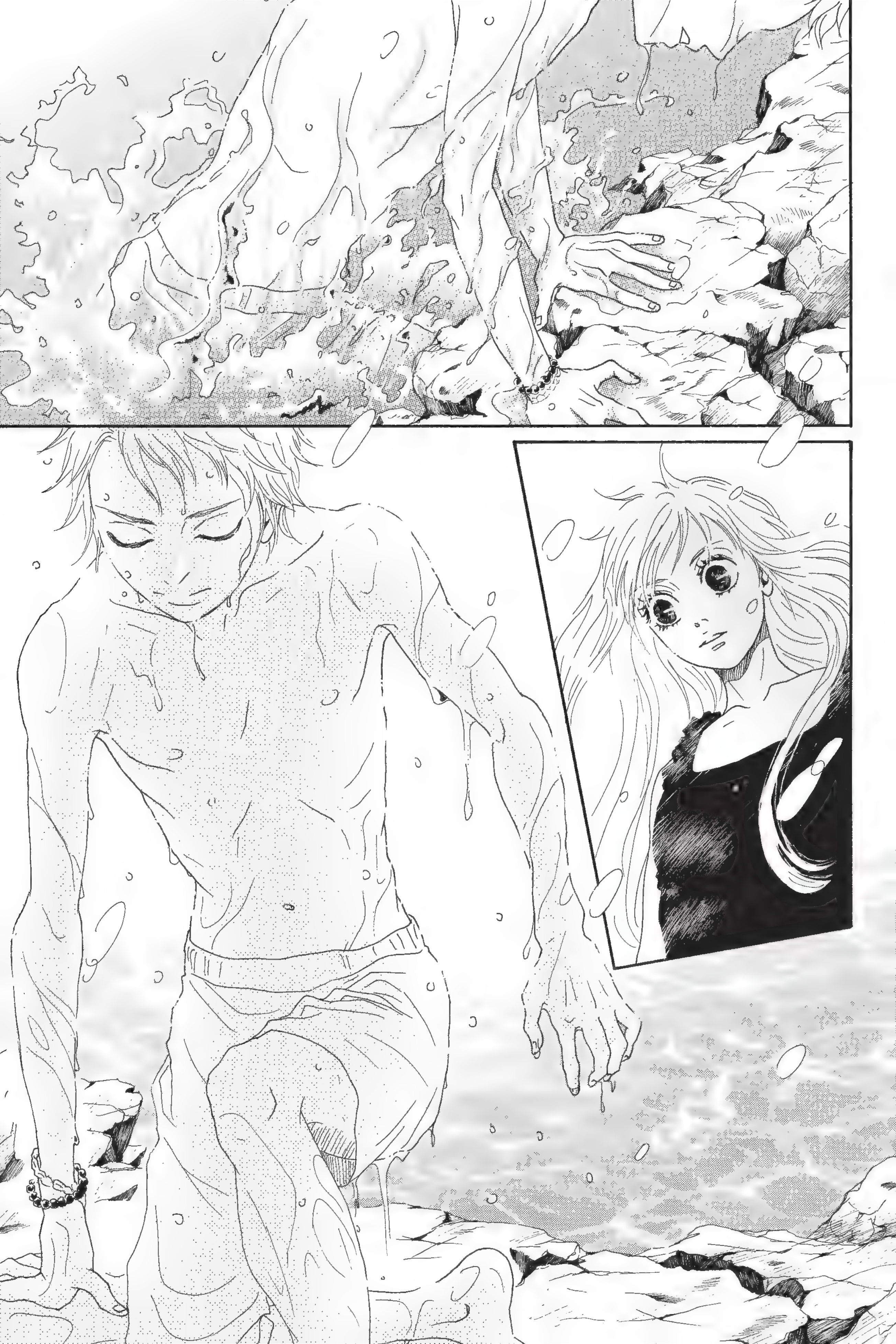

CAN YOU BLAME ME?
EVEN BACK THEN ...
...HE USED TO GLOW SO BRIGHTLY.
"...IT'S AS IF..."
"...HE WAS SHINING BRIGHTLY."
I COULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF HIM.
I JUST WANTED TO BE NEAR HIM.
"I WANTED TO BE BY YOUR SIDE..."
"...AND TO WATCH OVER YOU."
...WHEN KOU-CHAN DROWNED ME...
...EVEN THEN...

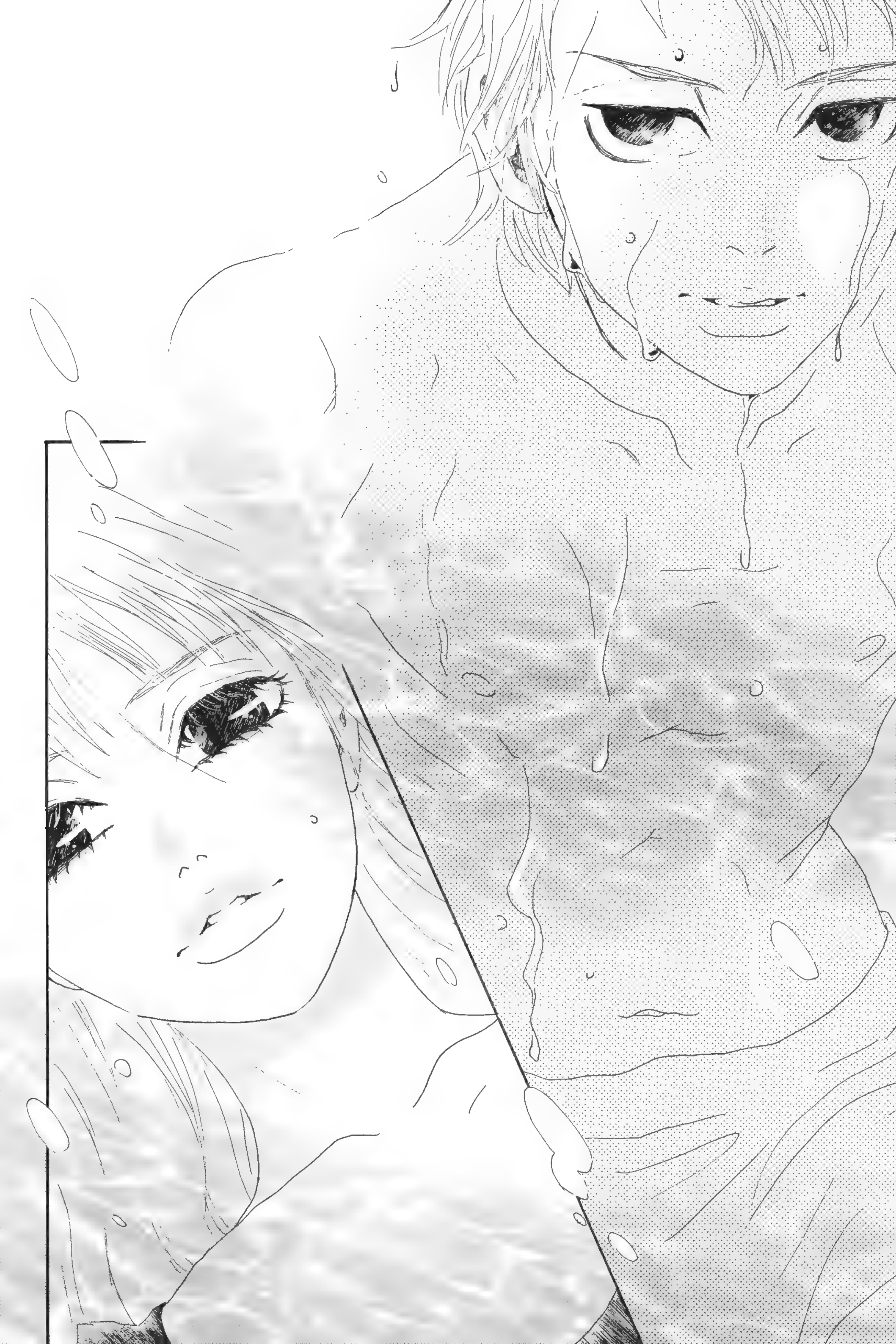

...I COULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF HIM.
"THERE'S SOMETHING THAT DAZZLES ME MORE THAN THE FLASH OF THE CAMERA."

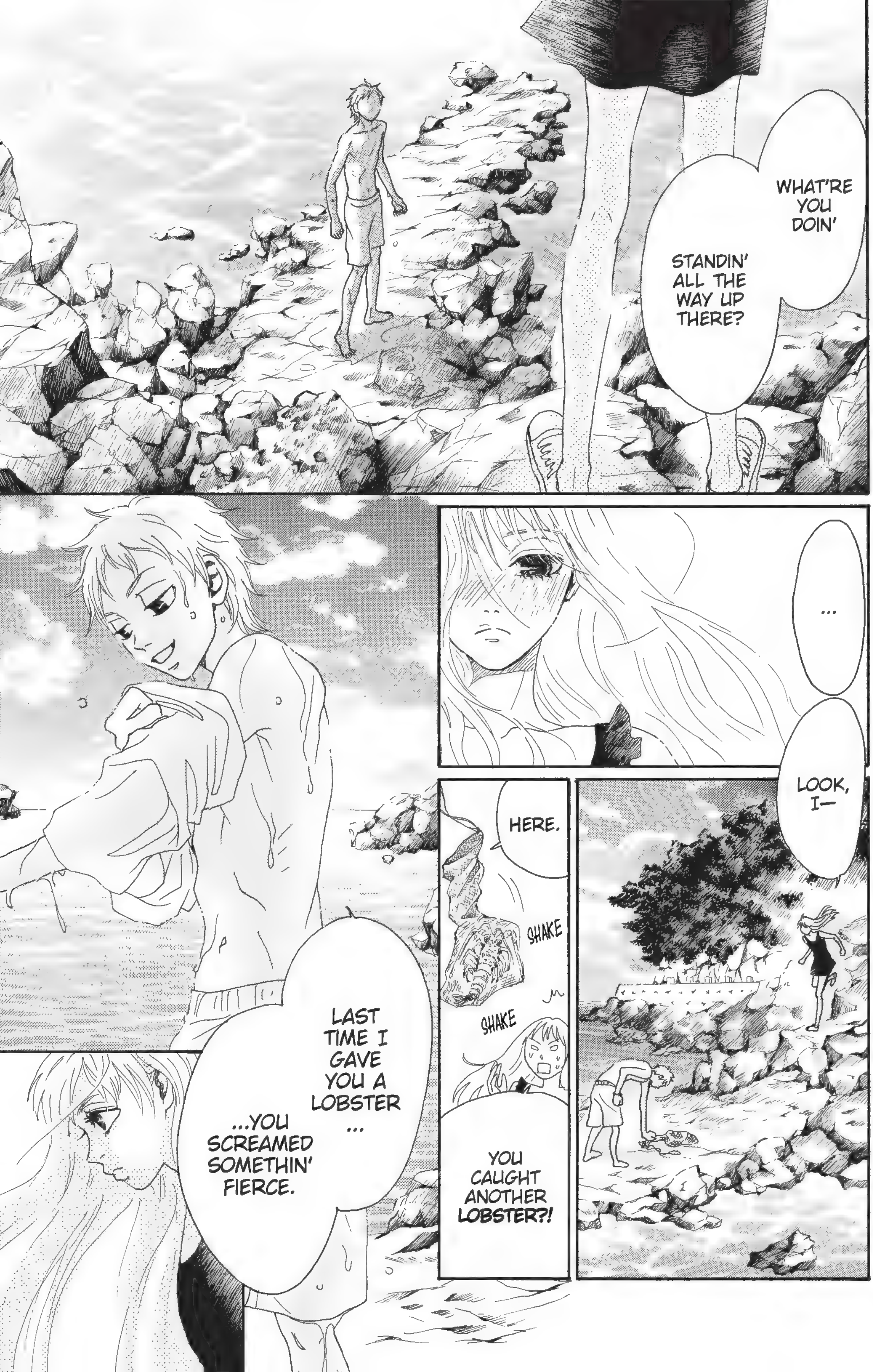

BUT THERE AIN'T NO WAY HE'D BE MY PARTNER.
HE'S MORE WELL-SUITED TO SOMEONE WHO GLOWS ...
...LIKE YOU, NATSUME-CHAN!
JUST SEEIN' THE TWO OF YOU TOGETHER MAKES MY HEART RACE!
OH!

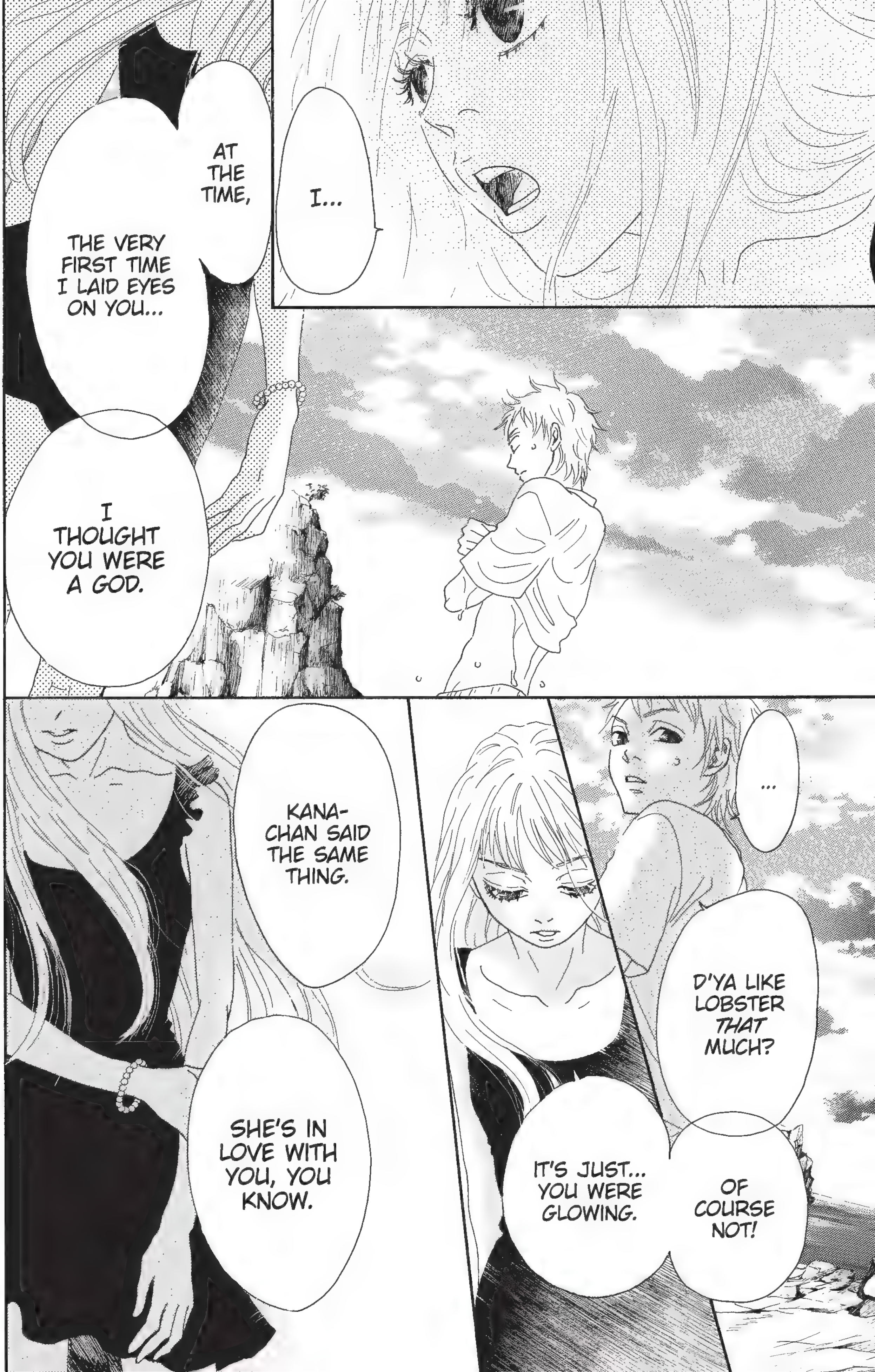

I FORGOT
HOW CUTE
SHE WAS...
I WAS TOO BUSY REMEMBERING HER FROM SWIM CLASS...
...THAT I FORGOT.
AH HA HA HA HA!
I'M A TERRIBLE PERSON,
AREN'T I?

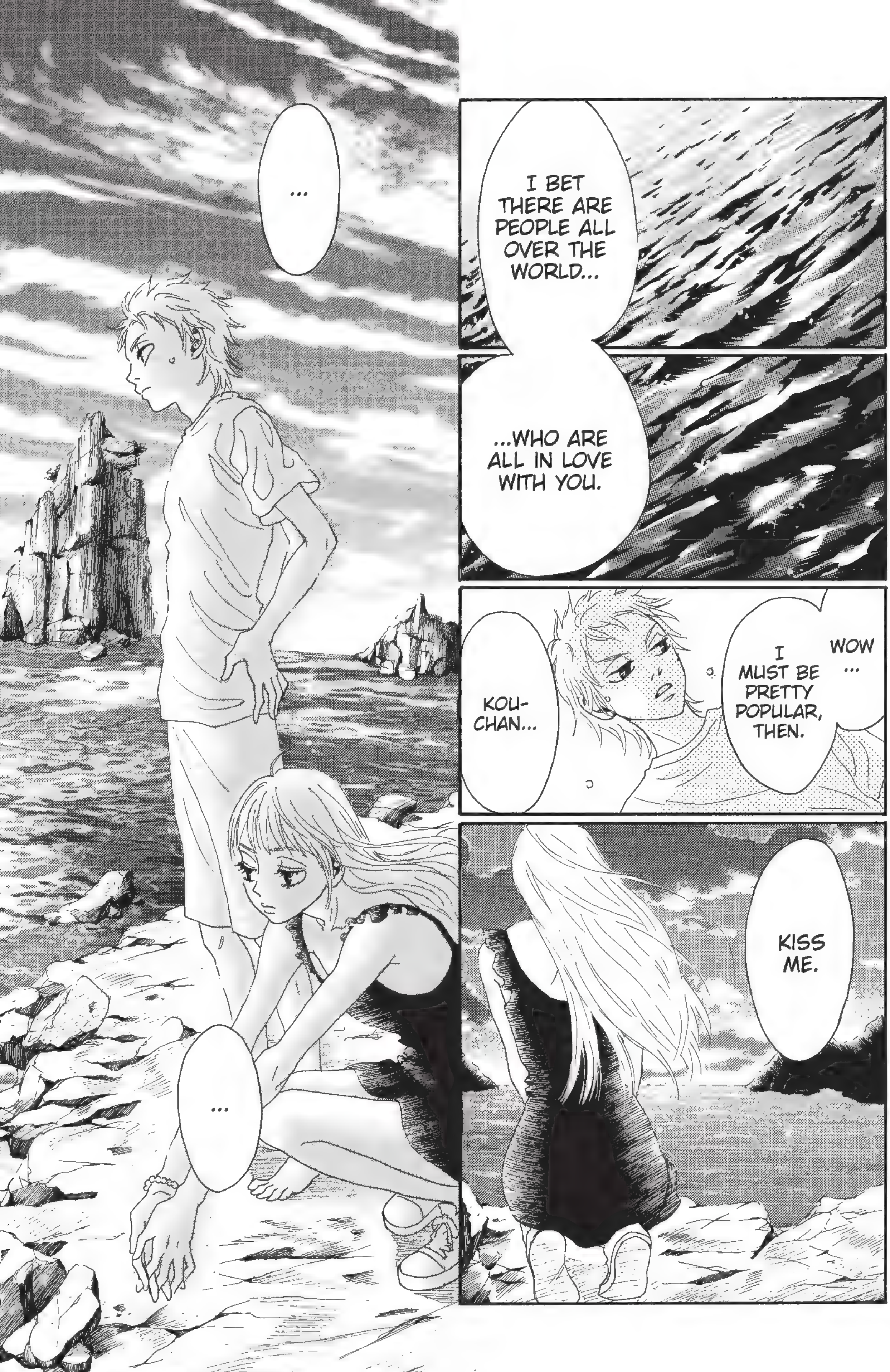

CRUNCH
...
"...AT SUNSET, IT'S REALLY PRETTY."
DID SHE...
...SEE HIM LIKE THIS, TOO?
SPLISH

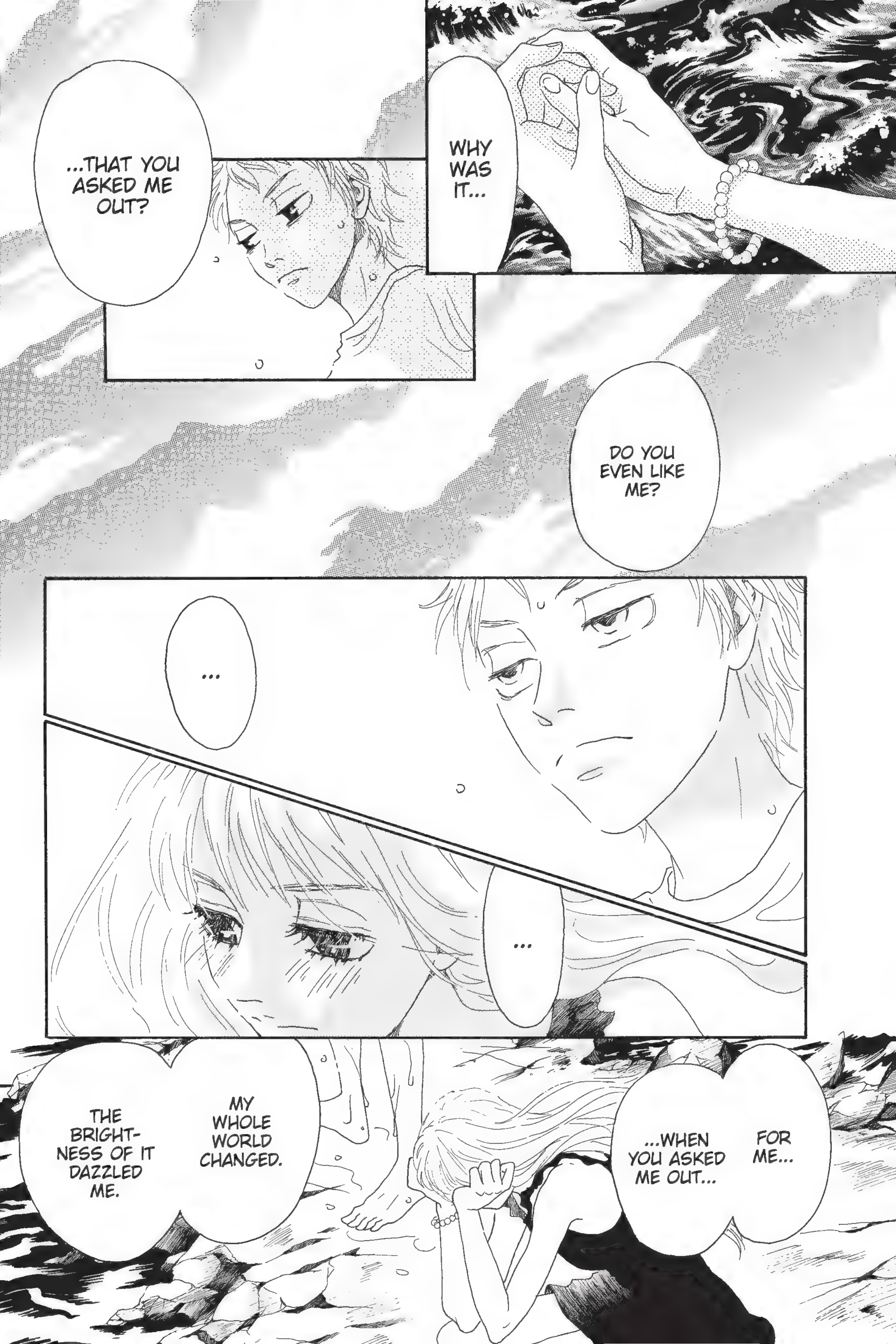


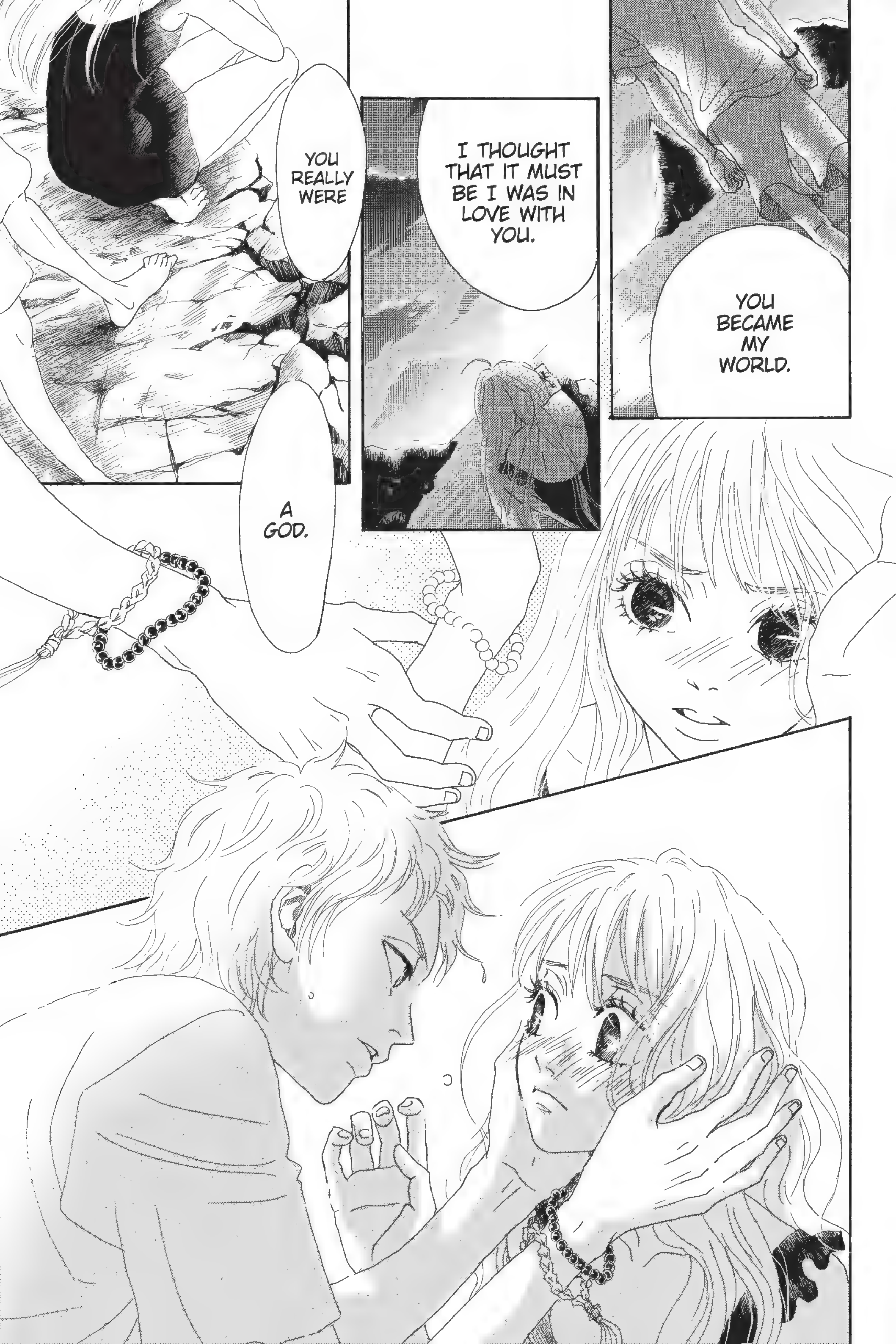


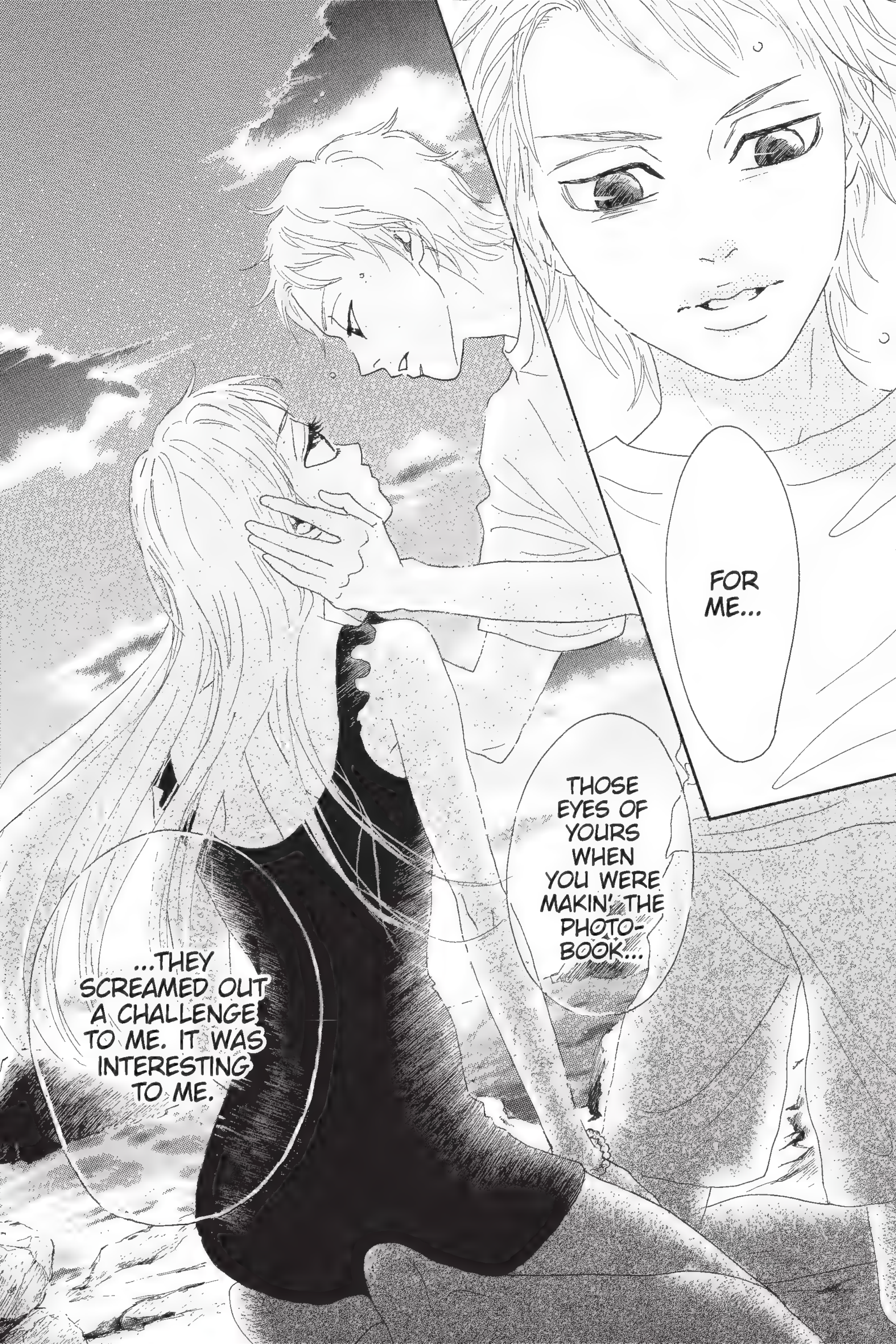

WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'
STANDIN' ALL THE WAY UP THERE?
...
LOOK, I—
HERE.
SHAKE
SHAKE
YOU CAUGHT ANOTHER LOBSTER?!
LAST TIME I GAVE YOU A LOBSTER ...
...YOU SCREAMED SOMETHIN' FIERCE.

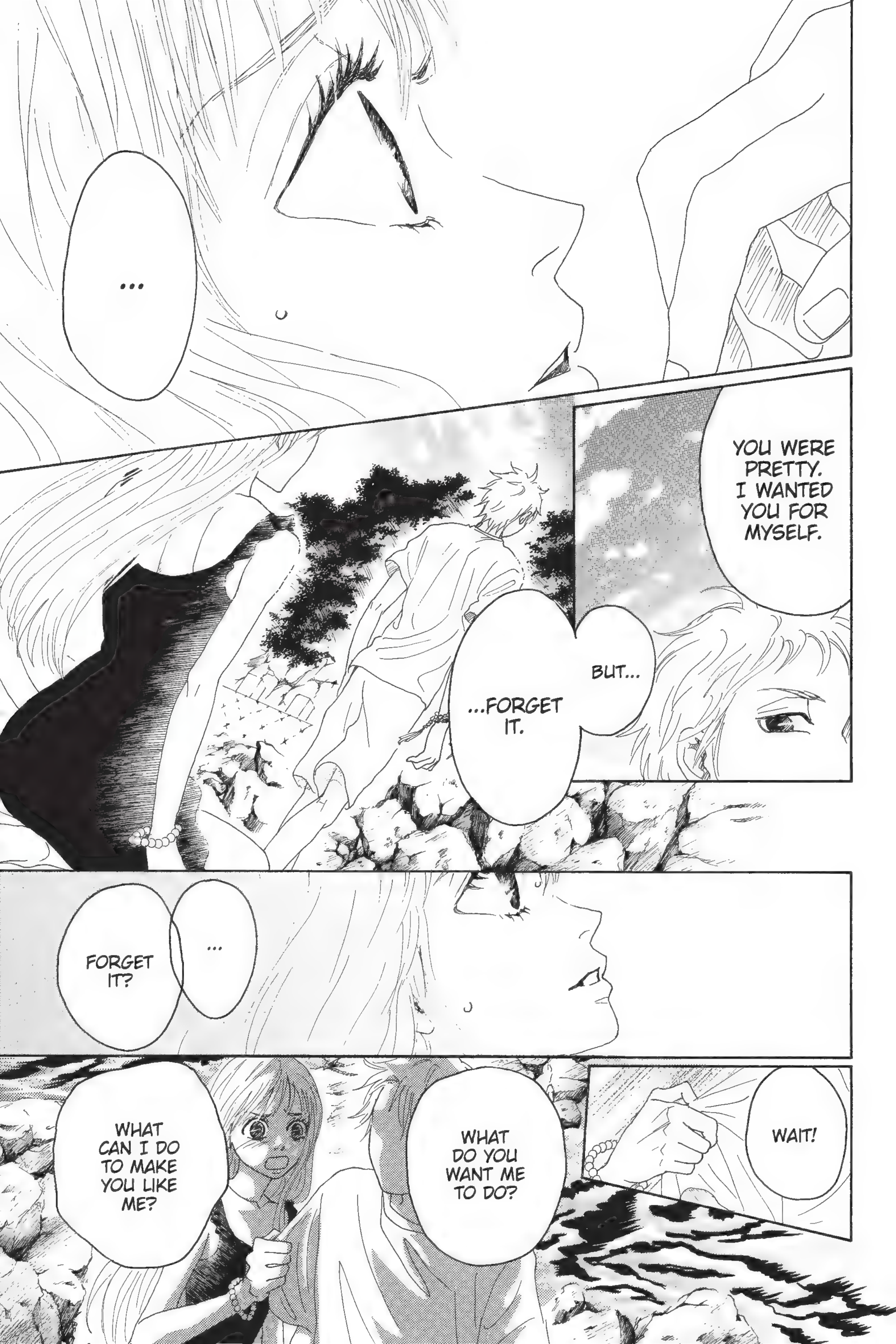

I...
AT THE TIME,
THE VERY FIRST TIME I LAID EYES ON YOU...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A GOD.
...
D'YA LIKE LOBSTER *THAT* MUCH?
OF COURSE NOT!
IT'S JUST... YOU WERE GLOWING.
KANA-CHAN SAID THE SAME THING.
SHE'S IN LOVE WITH YOU, YOU KNOW.

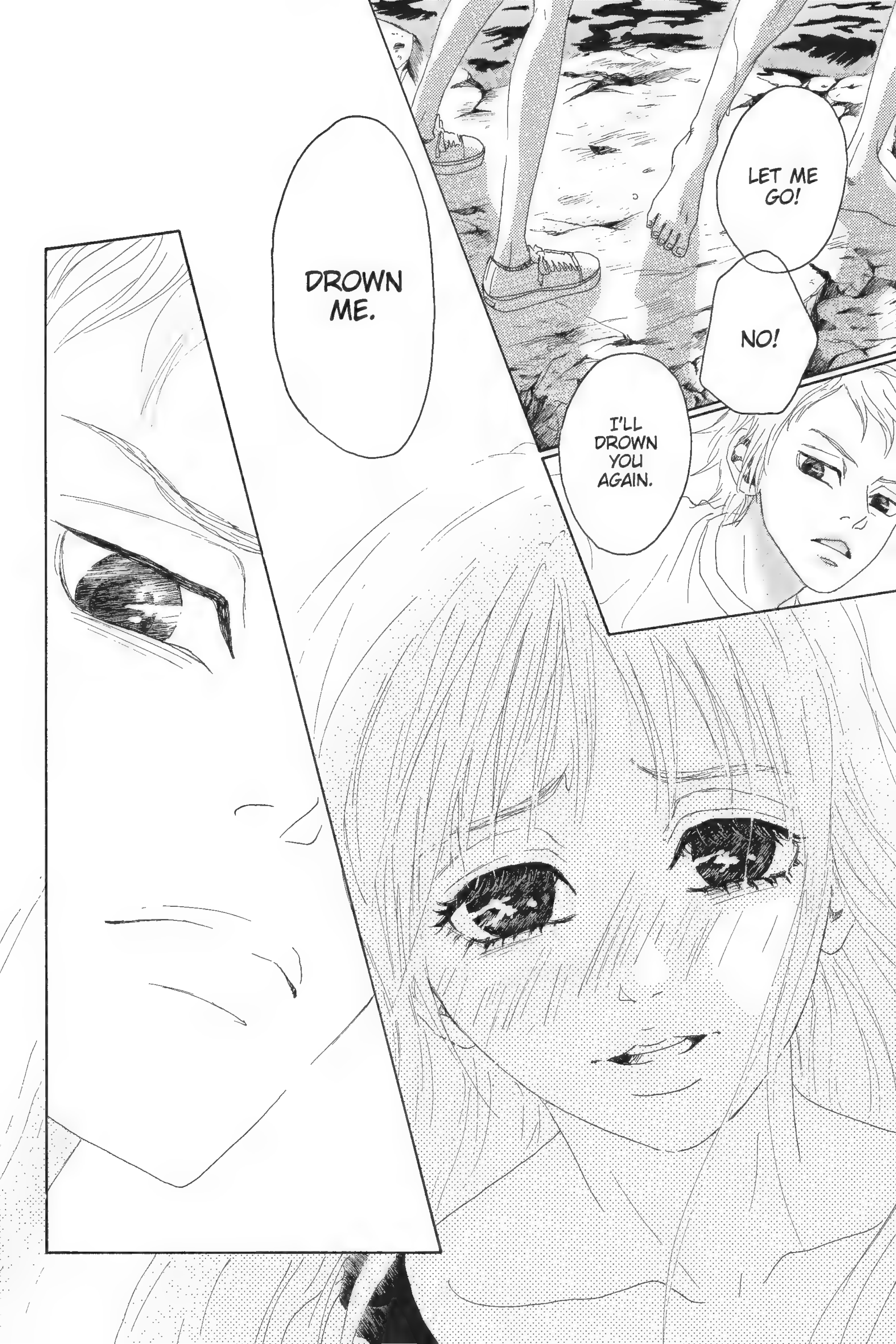

I BET THERE ARE PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD...
...WHO ARE ALL IN LOVE WITH YOU.
WOW...
I MUST BE PRETTY POPULAR, THEN.
KOU-CHAN...
KISS ME.
...
...


WHY WAS IT...
...THAT YOU ASKED ME OUT?
DO YOU EVEN LIKE ME?
...
...
FOR ME...
...WHEN YOU ASKED ME OUT...
MY WHOLE WORLD CHANGED.
THE BRIGHTNESS OF IT DAZZLED ME.

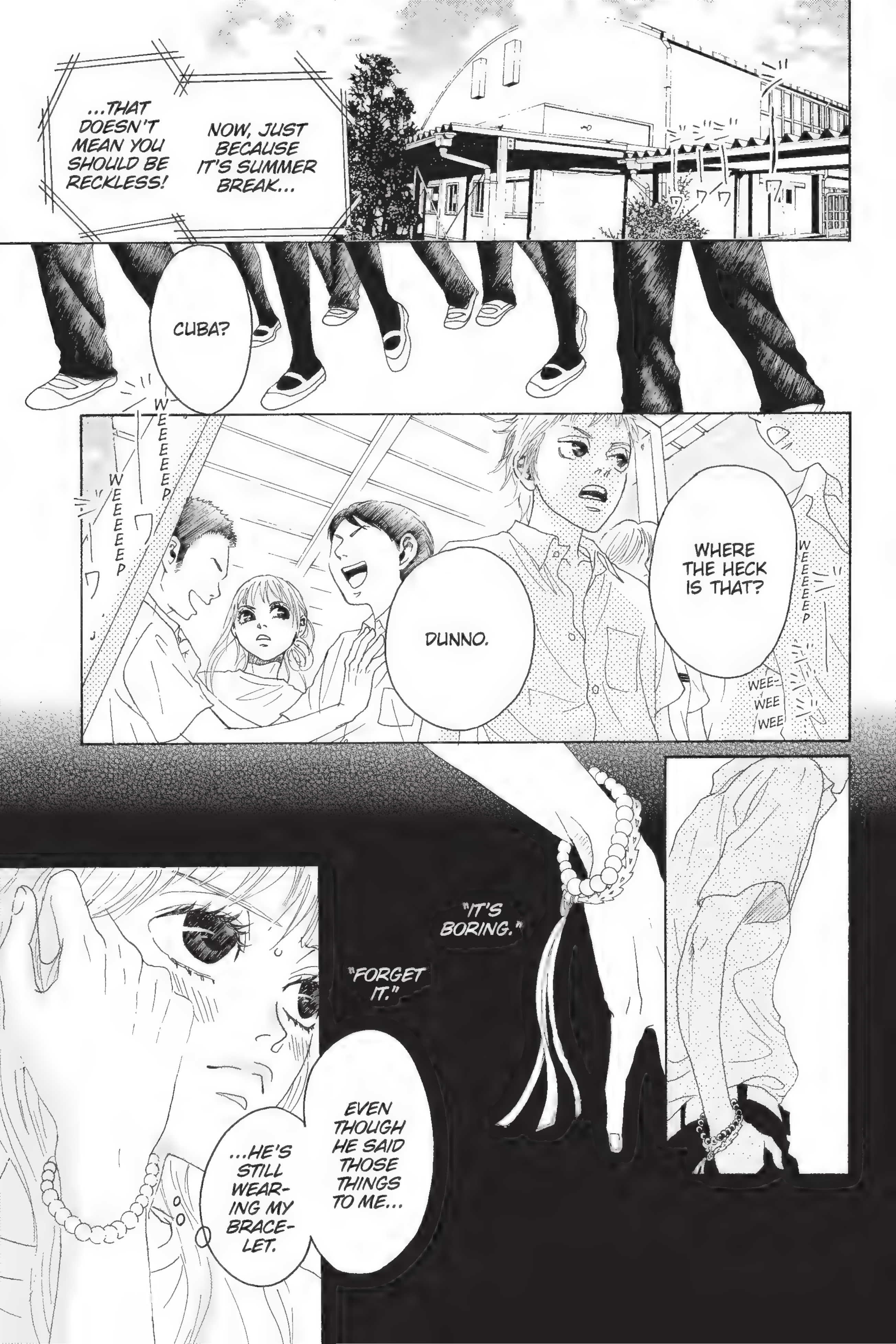

YOU BECAME MY WORLD.
I THOUGHT THAT IT MUST BE I WAS IN LOVE WITH YOU.
YOU REALLY WERE
A GOD.


FOR ME...
THOSE EYES OF YOURS WHEN YOU WERE MAKIN' THE PHOTOBOOK...
...THEY SCREAMED OUT A CHALLENGE TO ME. IT WAS INTERESTING TO ME.


...
YOU WERE PRETTY. I WANTED YOU FOR MYSELF.
BUT...
...FORGET IT.
...
FORGET IT?
WAIT!
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?
WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE YOU LIKE ME?

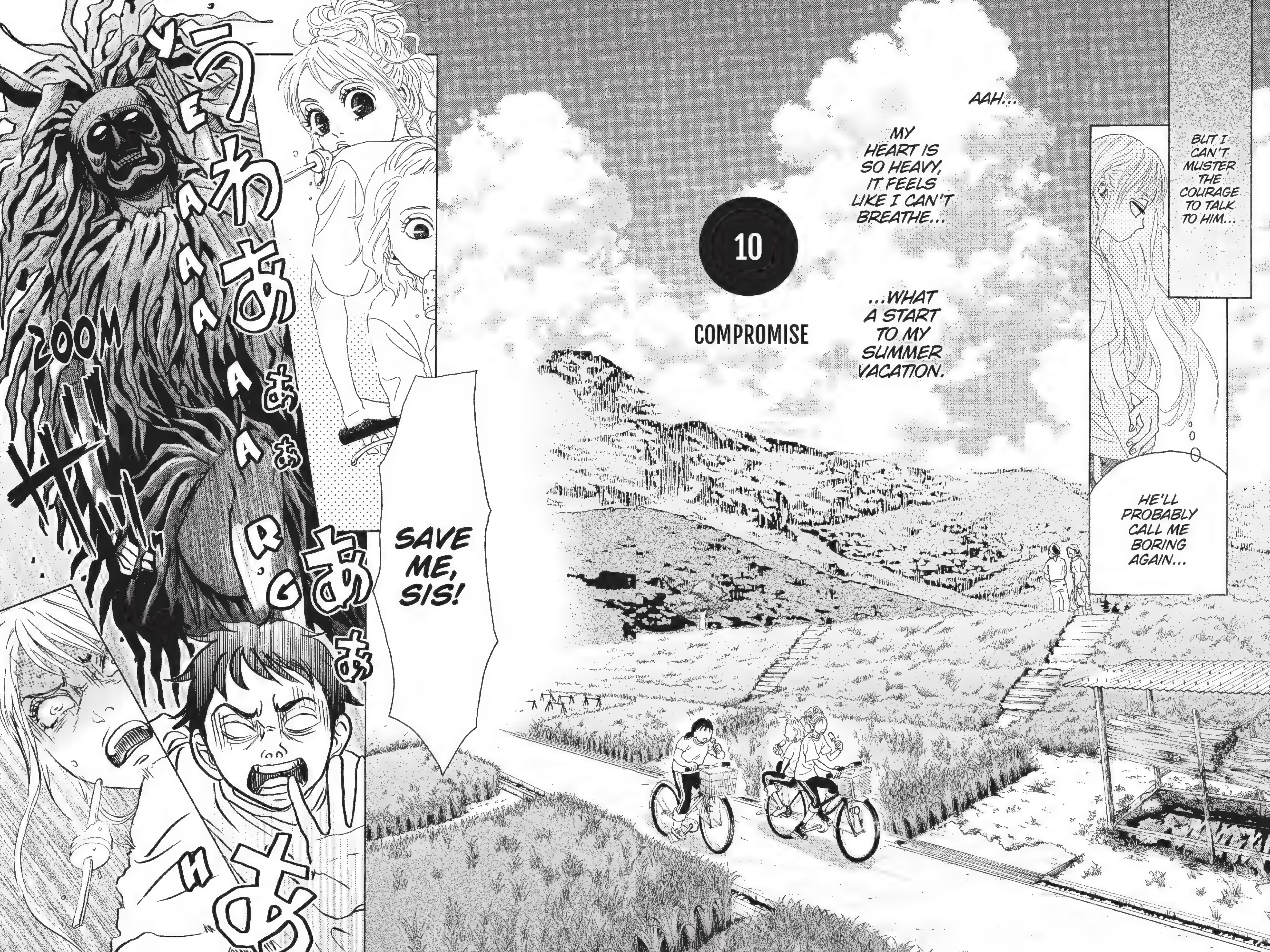

LET ME GO!
NO!
I'LL DROWN YOU AGAIN.
DROWN ME.

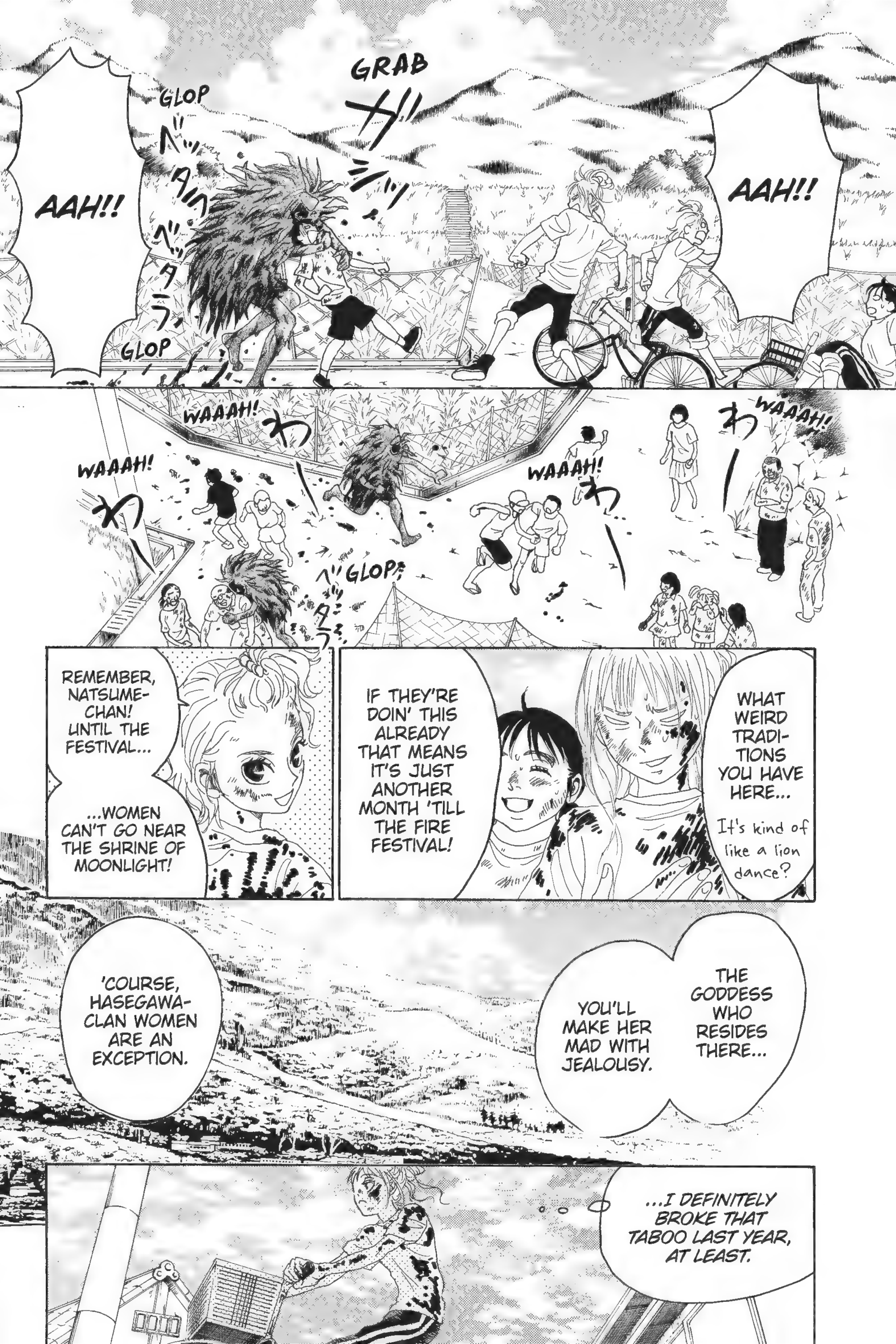
Drowning
Love

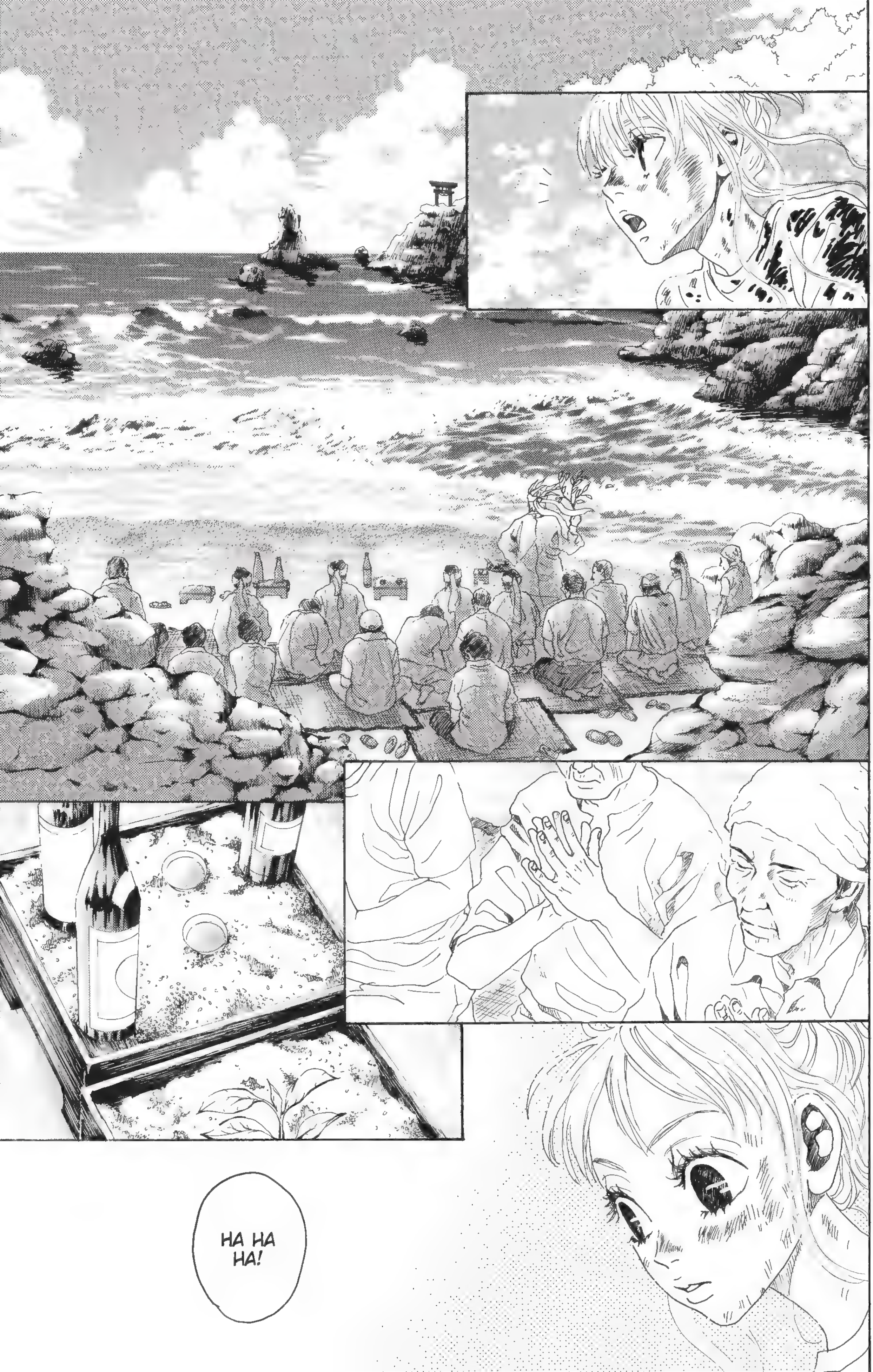

NOW, JUST BECAUSE IT'S SUMMER BREAK...
...THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD BE RECKLESS!
ワ ワ ワ ワ
CUBA?
WEEEEEP
WEEEEEP
WHERE THE HECK IS THAT?
DUNNO.
WEEEEEP
WEE-WEE WEE
"IT'S BORING."
"FORGET IT."
EVEN THOUGH HE SAID THOSE THINGS TO ME...
...HE'S STILL WEARING MY BRACELET.

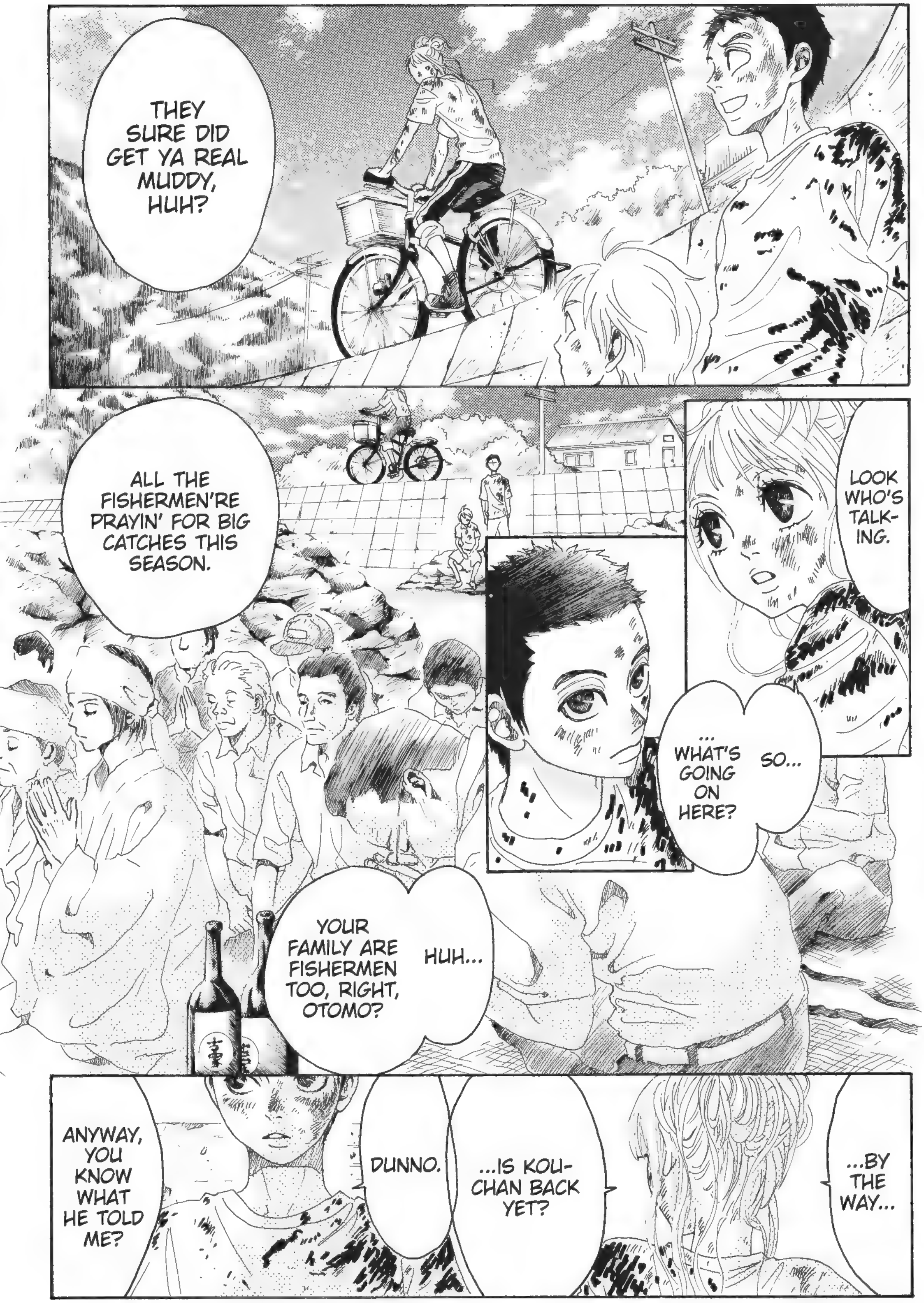
10

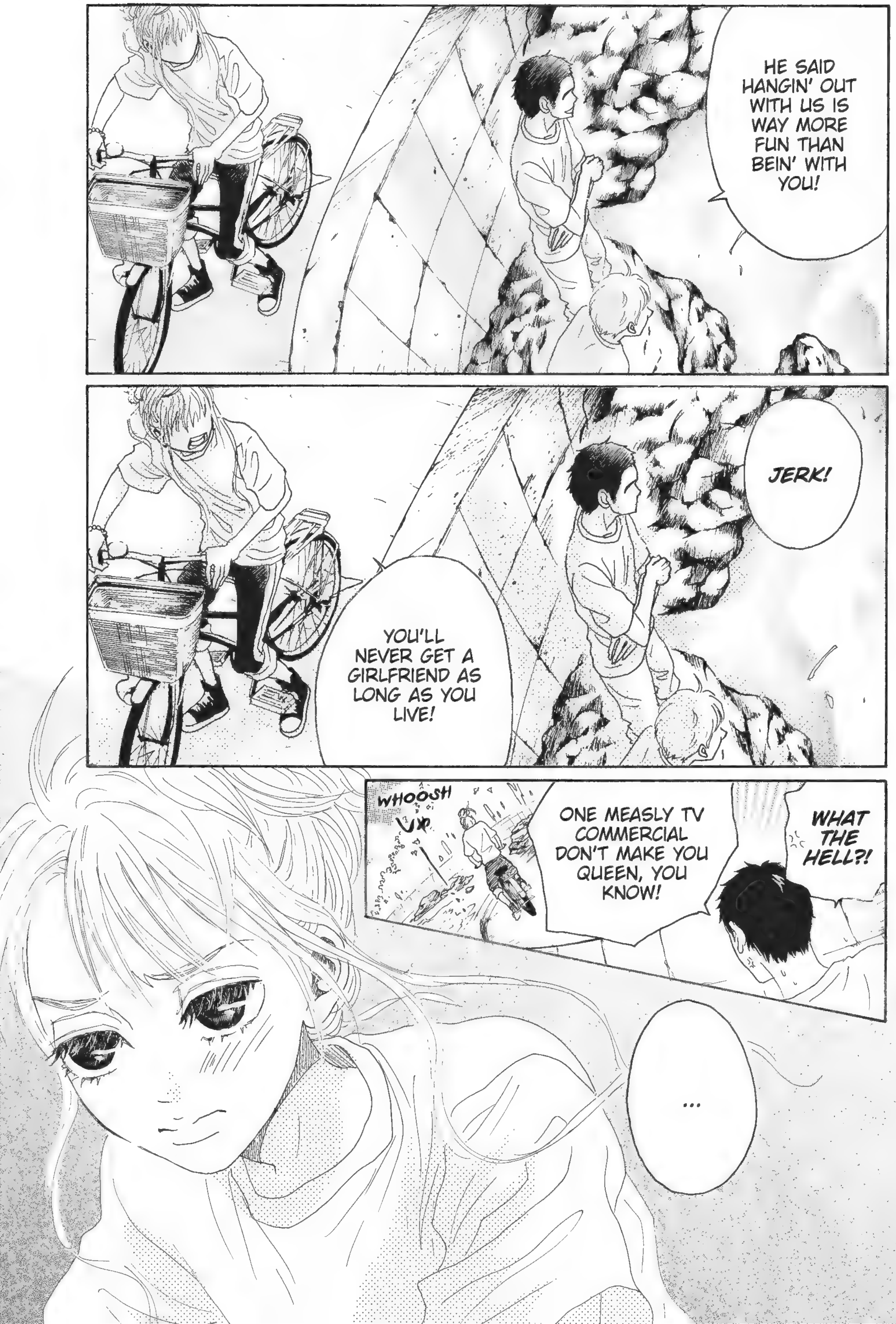
COMPROMISE

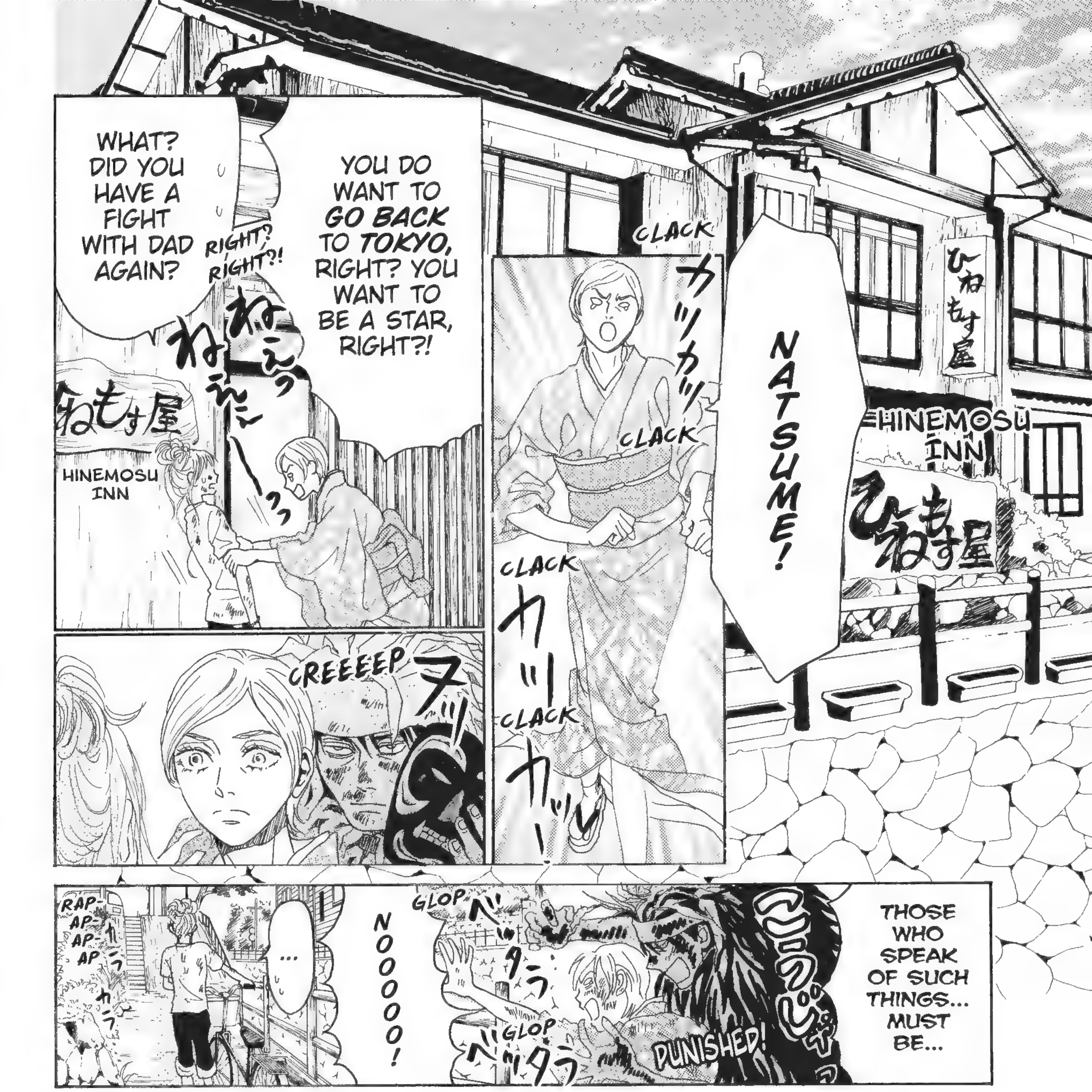

AAH...
MY HEART IS SO HEAVY, IT FEELS LIKE I CAN'T BREATHE...
BUT I CAN'T MUSTER THE COURAGE TO TALK TO HIM...
HE'LL PROBABLY CALL ME BORING AGAIN...
...WHAT A START TO MY SUMMER VACATION.
SAVE ME, SIS!
うわあああああああ
YEAAAAAARGH
ZOOM


AAH!!
GRAB
ガシッ
AAH!!
GLOP
ベッタラ
ベッタラ
GLOP
WAAAH!
わー
WAAAH!
わー
WAAAH!
わー
WAAAH!
わー
GLOP
ベッタラ
WHAT WEIRD TRADITIONS YOU HAVE HERE...
It's kind of like a lion dance?
IF THEY'RE DOIN' THIS ALREADY THAT MEANS IT'S JUST ANOTHER MONTH 'TILL THE FIRE FESTIVAL!
REMEMBER, NATSUME-CHAN! UNTIL THE FESTIVAL...
...WOMEN CAN'T GO NEAR THE SHRINE OF MOONLIGHT!
THE GODDESS WHO RESIDES THERE...
YOU'LL MAKE HER MAD WITH JEALOUSY.
'COURSE, HASEGAWA-CLAN WOMEN ARE AN EXCEPTION.
...I DEFINITELY BROKE THAT TABOO LAST YEAR, AT LEAST.


HA HA HA!


THEY SURE DID GET YA REAL MUDDY, HUH?
LOOK WHO'S TALKING.
SO...
...WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
ALL THE FISHERMEN'RE PRAYIN' FOR BIG CATCHES THIS SEASON.
HUH...
YOUR FAMILY ARE FISHERMEN TOO, RIGHT, OTOMO?
...BY THE WAY...
...IS KOU-CHAN BACK YET?
DUNNO.
ANYWAY, YOU KNOW WHAT HE TOLD ME?

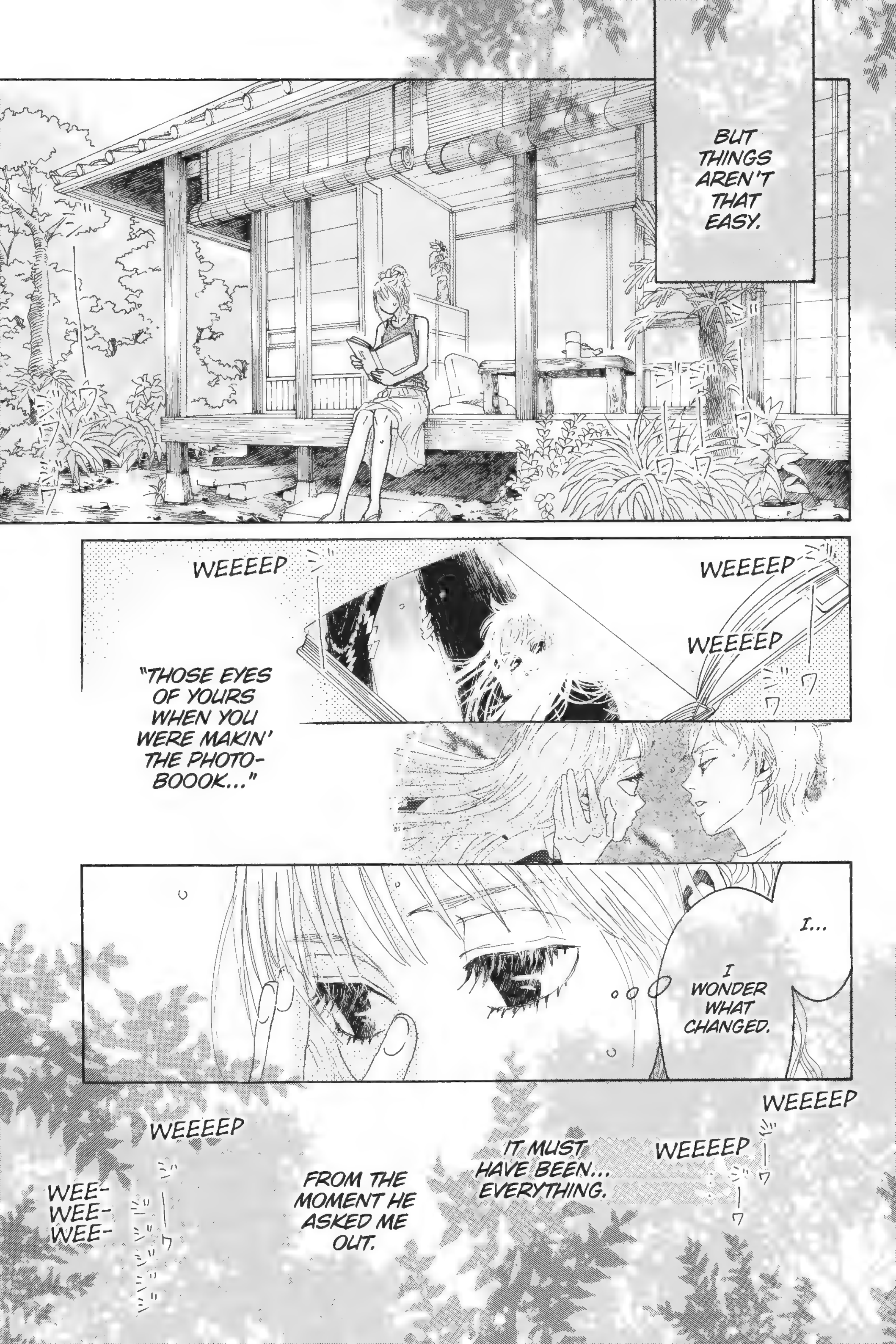

HE SAID HANGIN' OUT WITH US IS WAY MORE FUN THAN BEIN' WITH YOU!
JERK!
YOU'LL NEVER GET A GIRLFRIEND AS LONG AS YOU LIVE!
WHAT THE HELL?!
ONE MEASLY TV COMMERCIAL DON'T MAKE YOU QUEEN, YOU KNOW!
WHOOSH
...

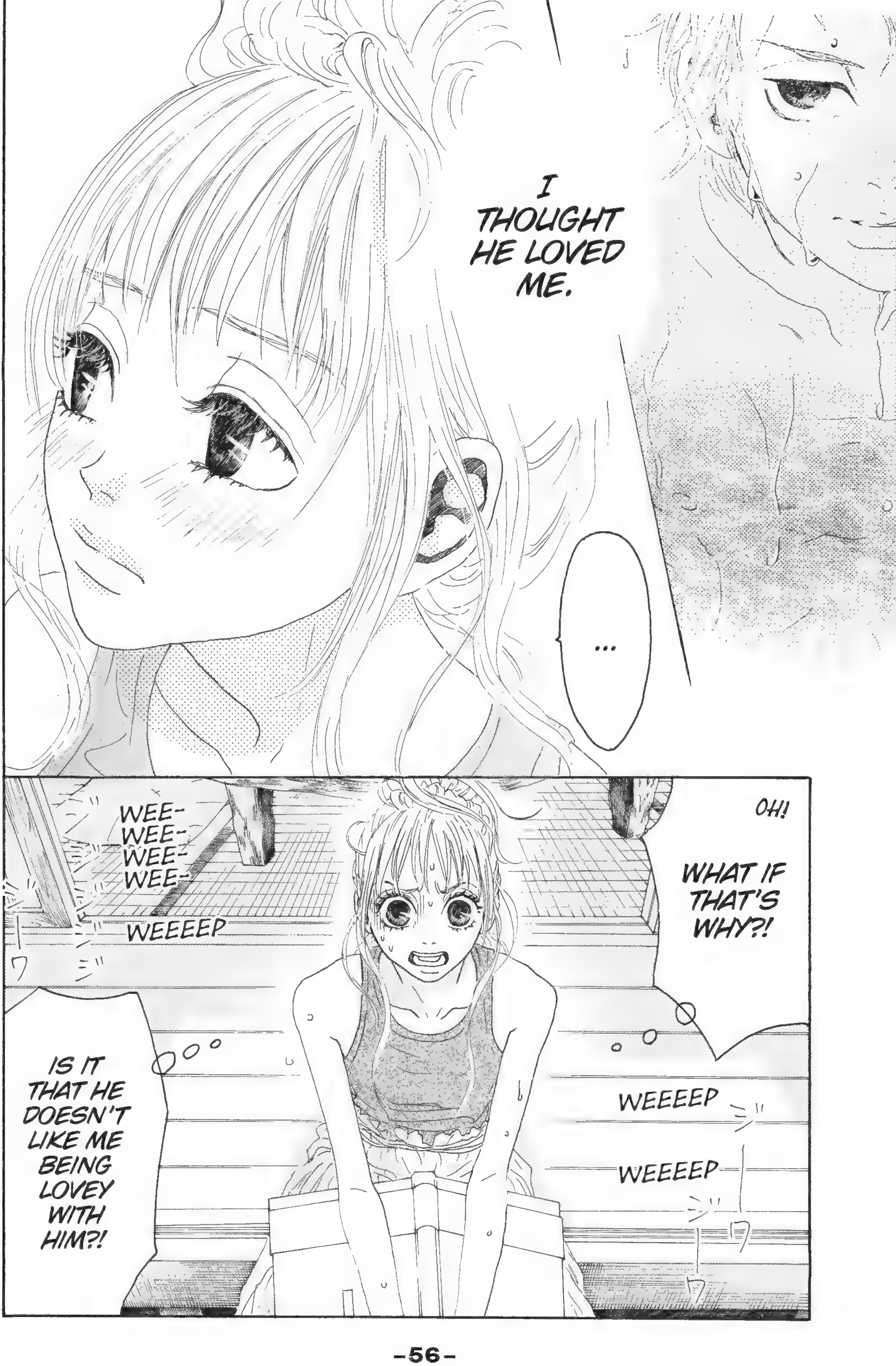

CLACK
CLACK
NATSUME!
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN
ひねもす屋
CLACK
CLACK
YOU DO WANT TO GO BACK TO TOKYO, RIGHT? YOU WANT TO BE A STAR, RIGHT?!
RIGHT? RIGHT?!
WHAT? DID YOU HAVE A FIGHT WITH DAD AGAIN?
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN
CREEEEEP
THOSE WHO SPEAK OF SUCH THINGS... MUST BE...
PUNISHED!
GLOP
GLOP
NOOOOOO!
...
RAP-AP-AP-AP

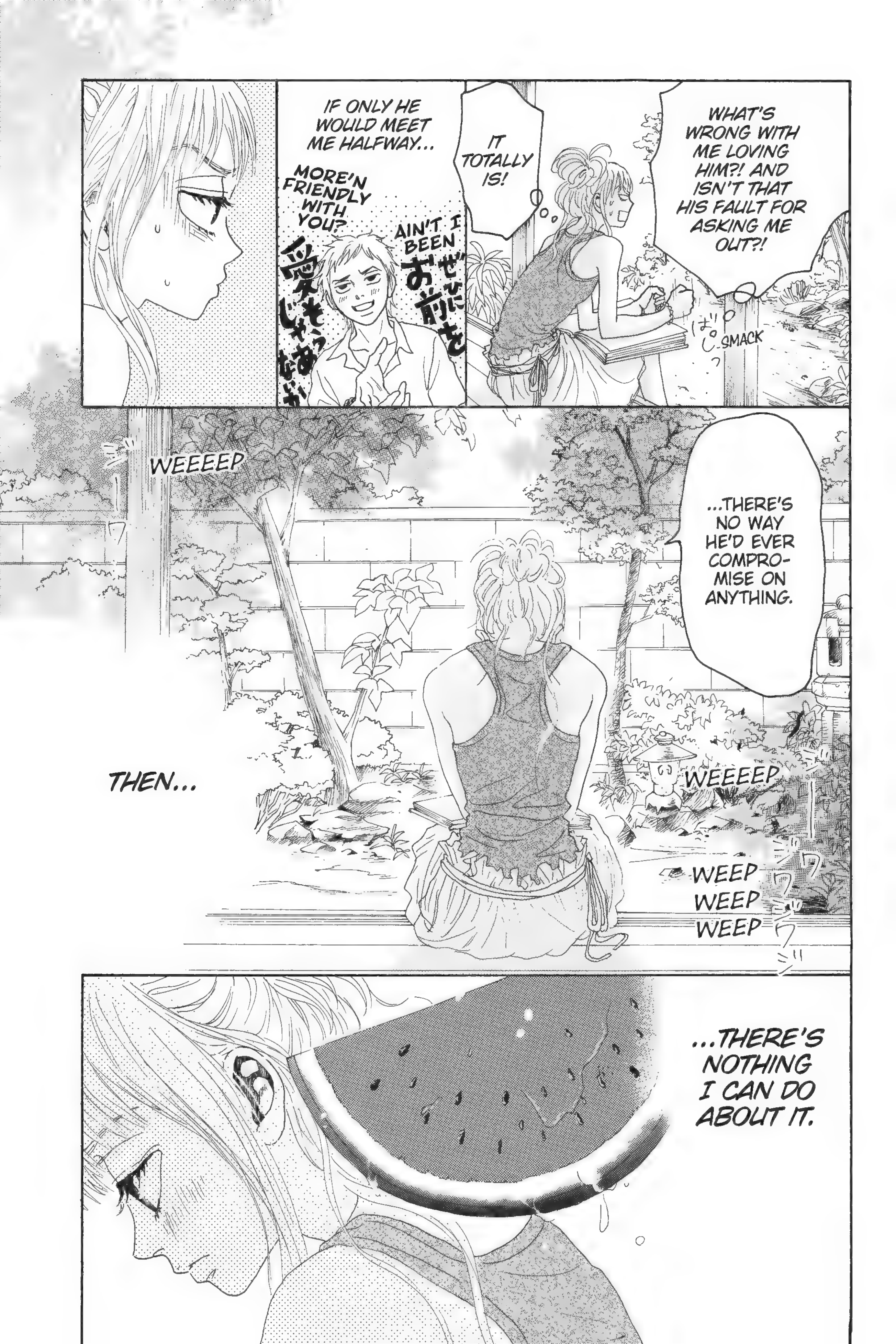
IF, FOR EXAMPLE...

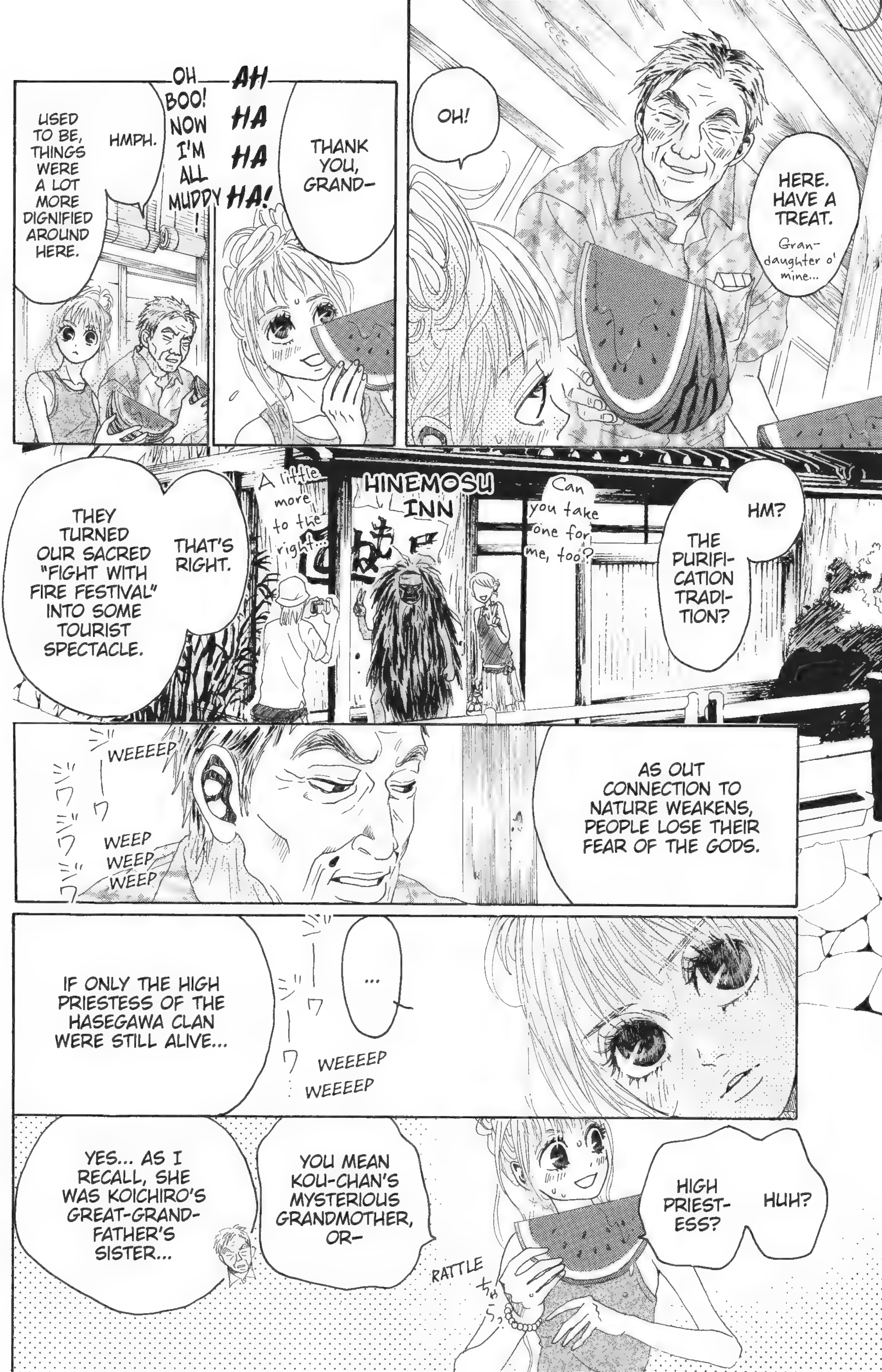
IF I WENT BACK TO THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, AND THAT MADE KOU-CHAN THINK I WAS INTERESTING AGAIN...

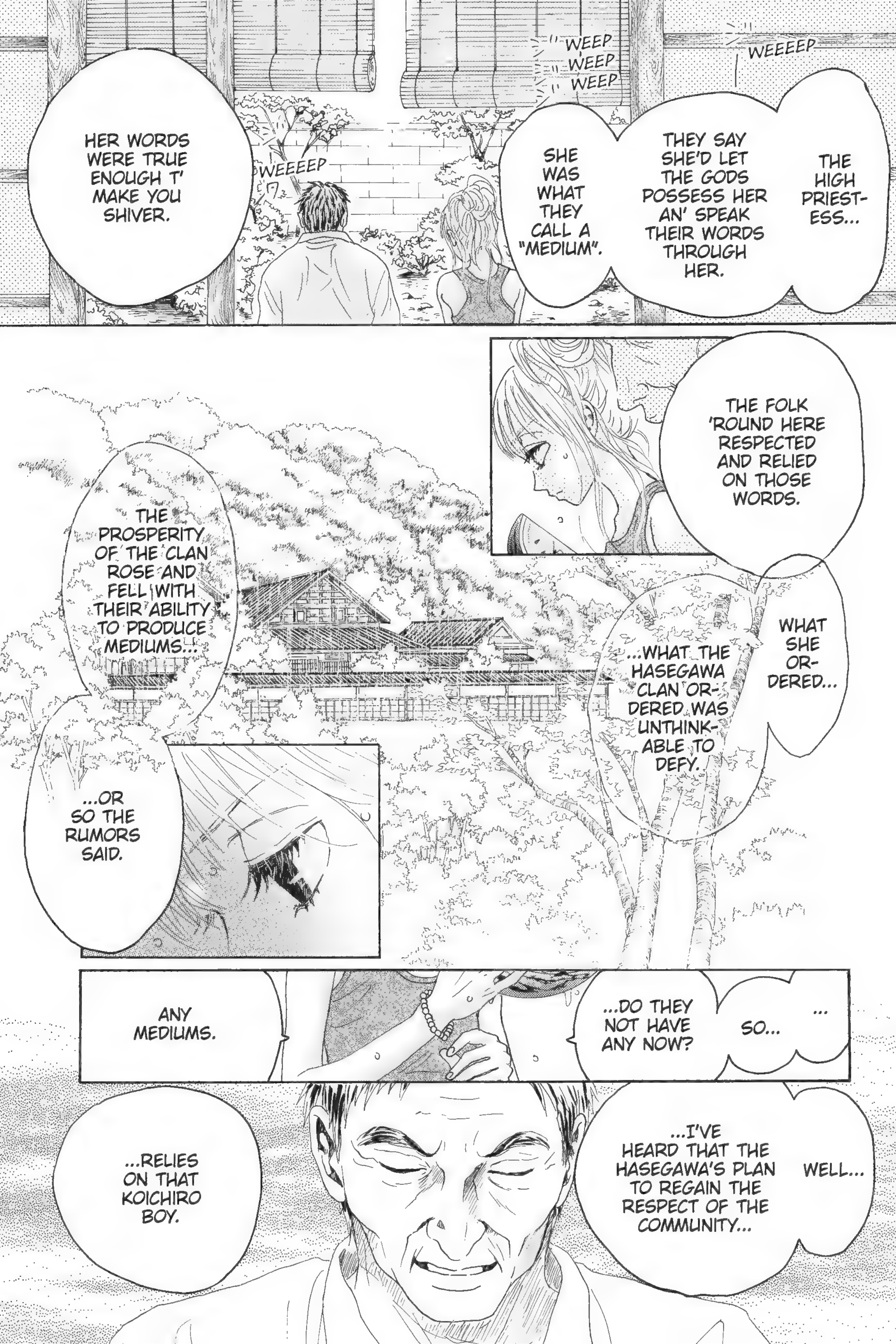
...IT'D SOLVE BOTH PROBLEMS.

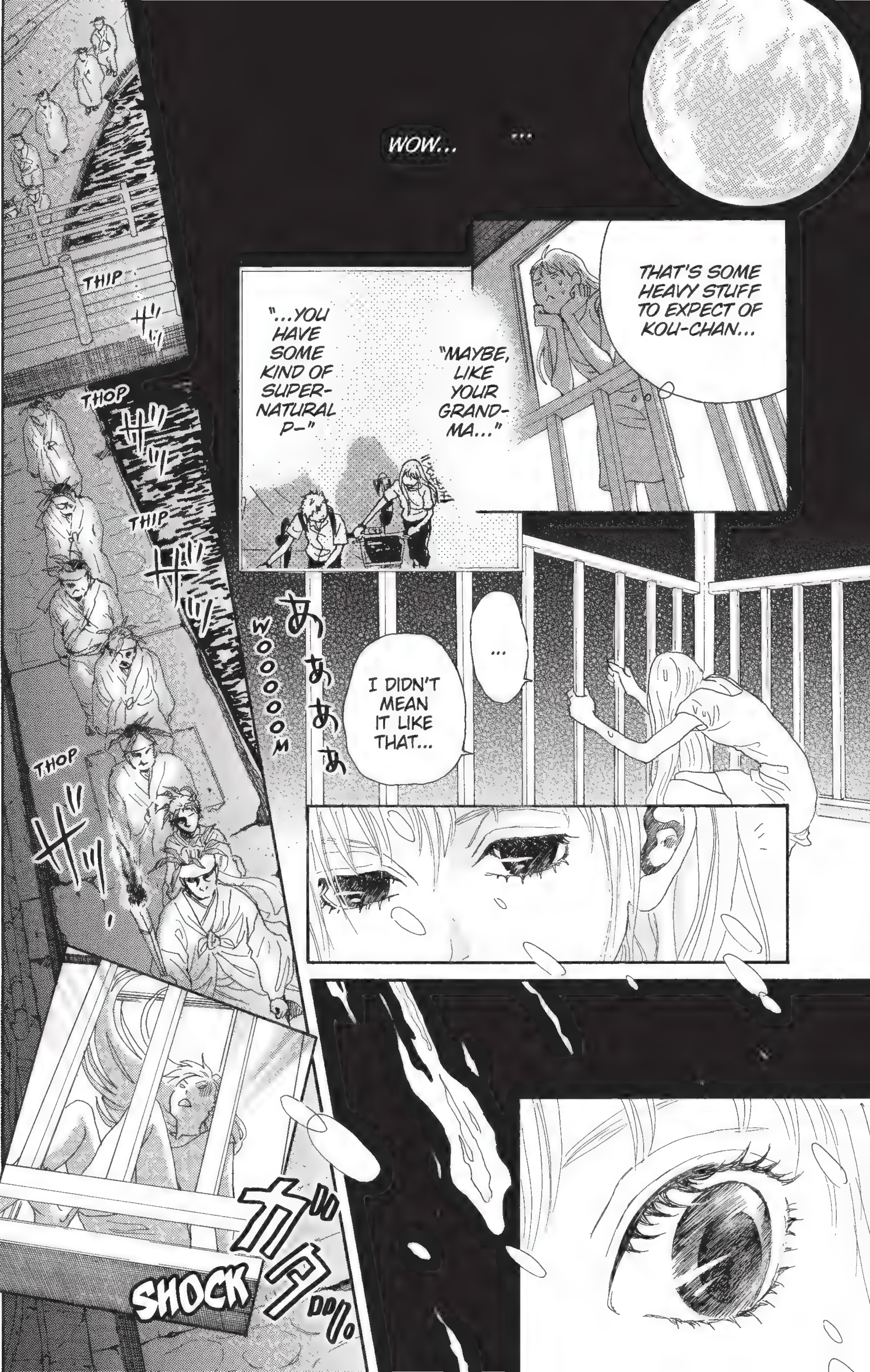

BUT THINGS AREN'T THAT EASY.
WEEEEP
WEEEEP
WEEEEP
"THOSE EYES OF YOURS WHEN YOU WERE MAKIN' THE PHOTO-BOOOK..."
I...
I WONDER WHAT CHANGED.
WEEEEP
WEEEEP
IT MUST HAVE BEEN... EVERYTHING.
FROM THE MOMENT HE ASKED ME OUT.
WEEEEP
WEE- WEE- WEE-

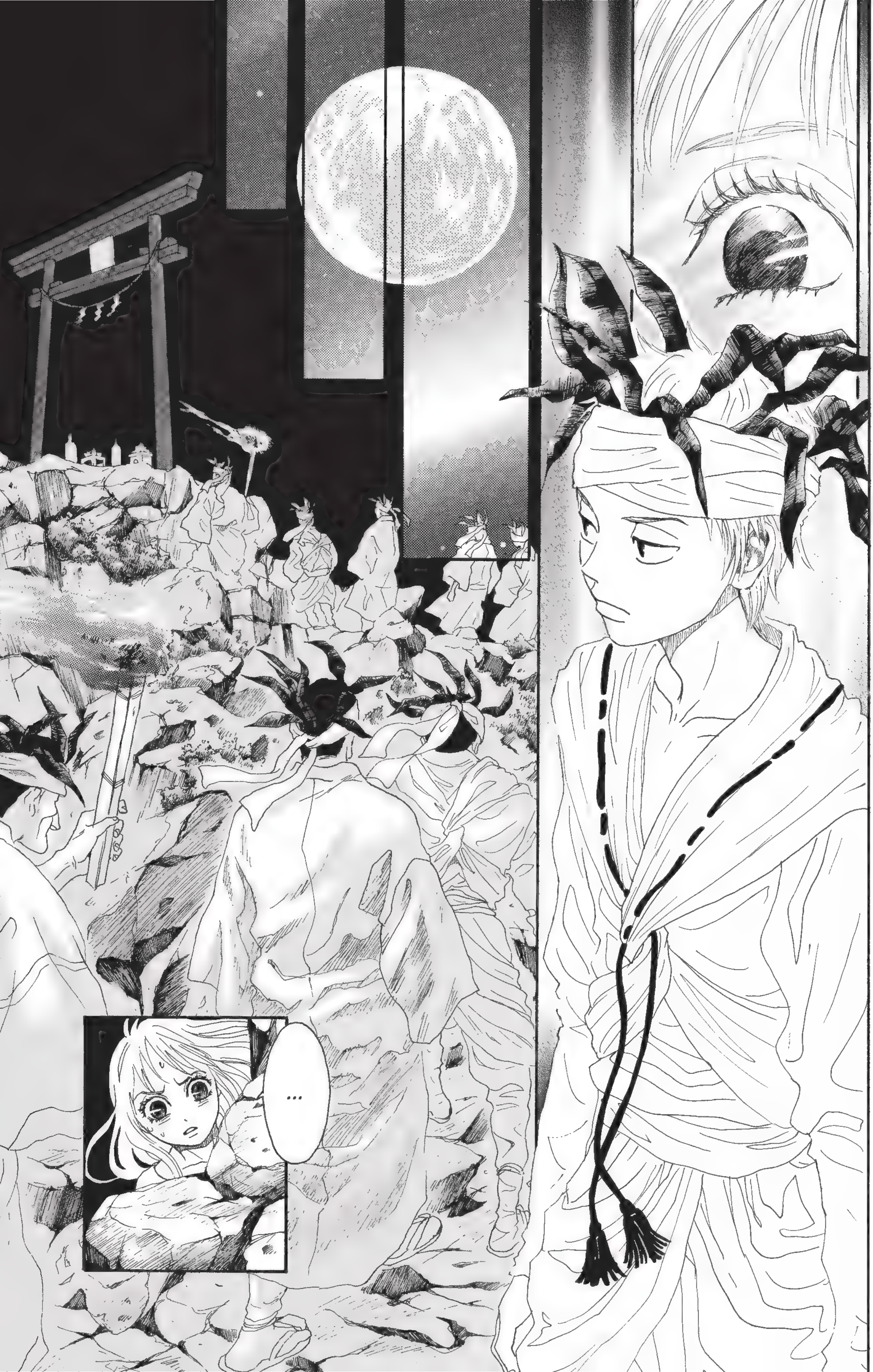

I THOUGHT HE LOVED ME.
...
OH!
WHAT IF THAT'S WHY?!
WEEEEP
WEEEEP
IS IT THAT HE DOESN'T LIKE ME BEING LOVEY WITH HIM?!
WEE-WEE-WEE-WEE-
WEEEEP

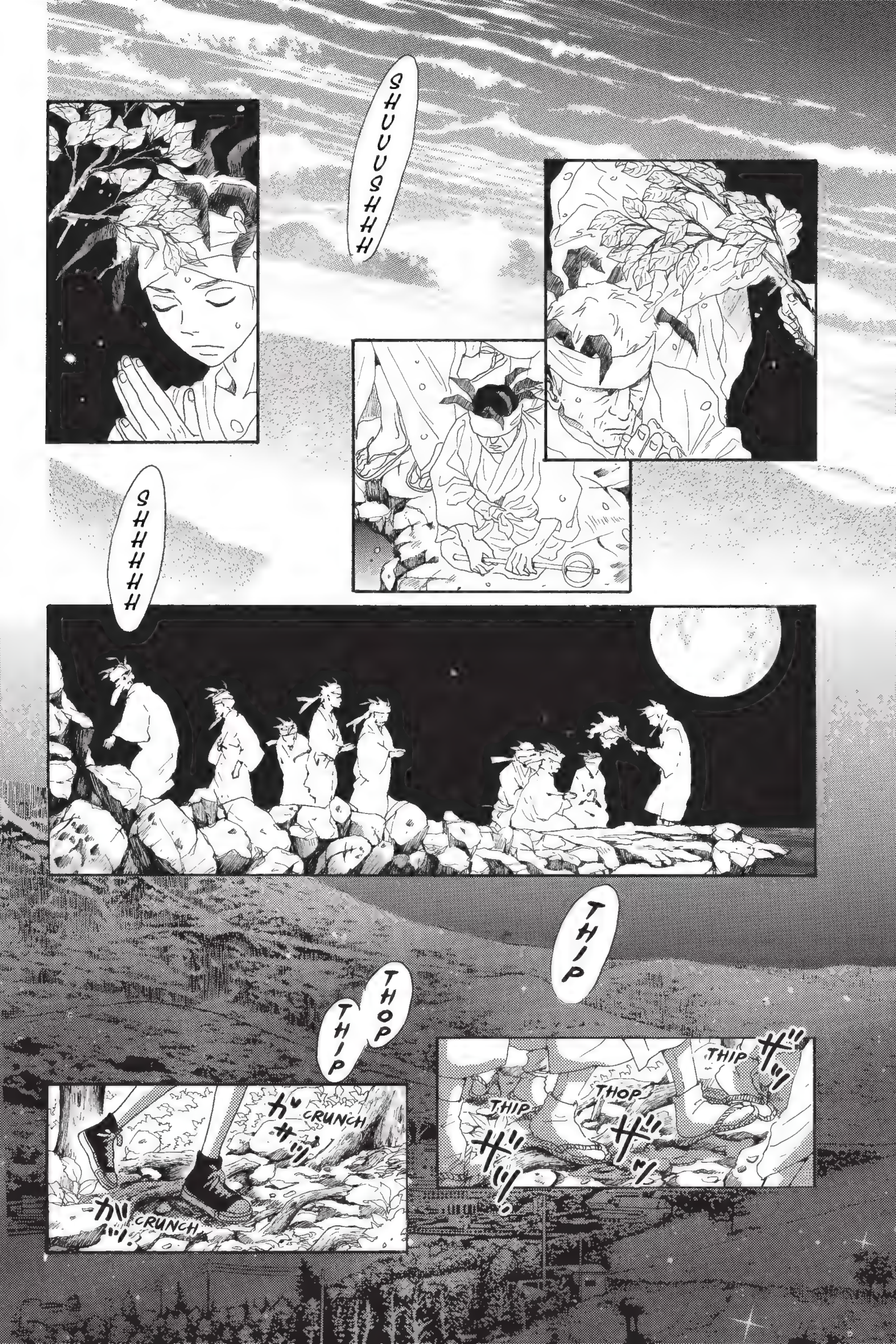

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME LOVING HIM?! AND ISN'T THAT HIS FAULT FOR ASKING ME OUT?!
ぱしっ
SMACK
IT TOTALLY IS!
IF ONLY HE WOULD MEET ME HALFWAY...
ぜひにお前を
愛そうじゃなぃか
AIN'T I BEEN MORE'N FRIENDLY WITH YOU?
...THERE'S NO WAY HE'D EVER COMPROMISE ON ANYTHING.
ジーワ
WEEEEP
WEEEEP
ジーワ
ジワジワ
WEEP WEEP WEEP
THEN...
...THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.

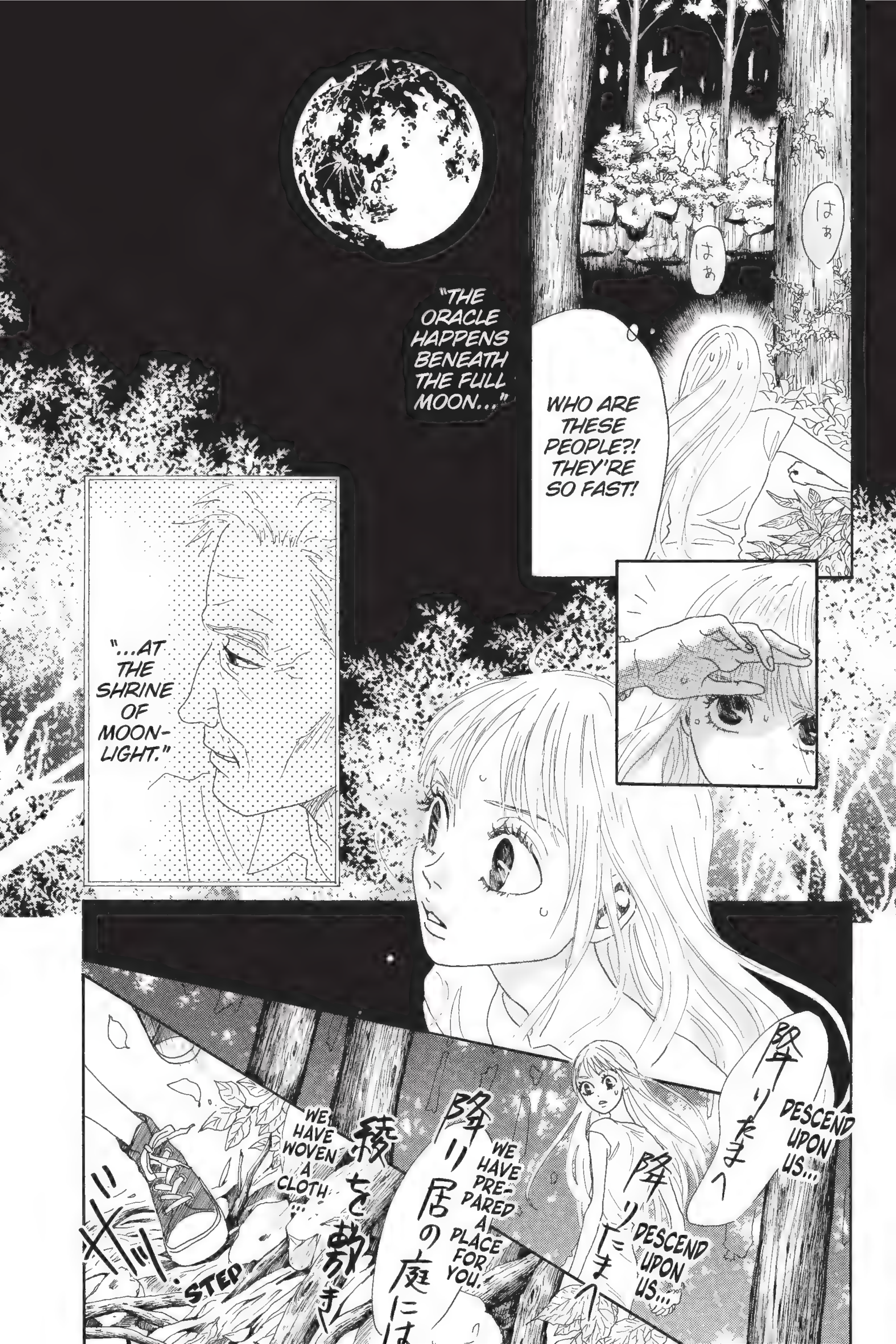

HERE. HAVE A TREAT.
Gran-daughter o' mine...
OH!
THANK YOU, GRAND-
AH HA HA HA!
OH BOO! NOW I'M ALL MUDDY!
HMPH.
USED TO BE, THINGS WERE A LOT MORE DIGNIFIED AROUND HERE.
HM?
THE PURIFICATION TRADITION?
Can you take one for me, too?
HINEMOSU INN
A little more to the right...
THAT'S RIGHT.
THEY TURNED OUR SACRED "FIGHT WITH FIRE FESTIVAL" INTO SOME TOURIST SPECTACLE.
AS OUT CONNECTION TO NATURE WEAKENS, PEOPLE LOSE THEIR FEAR OF THE GODS.
ジーワ WEEEEP
ジワジワジワ WEEP WEEP WEEP
...
ジーワ WEEEEP WEEEEP
IF ONLY THE HIGH PRIESTESS OF THE HASEGAWA CLAN WERE STILL ALIVE...
HUH?
HIGH PRIESTESS?
RATTLE
YOU MEAN KOU-CHAN'S MYSTERIOUS GRANDMOTHER, OR-
YES... AS I RECALL, SHE WAS KOICHIRO'S GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S SISTER...

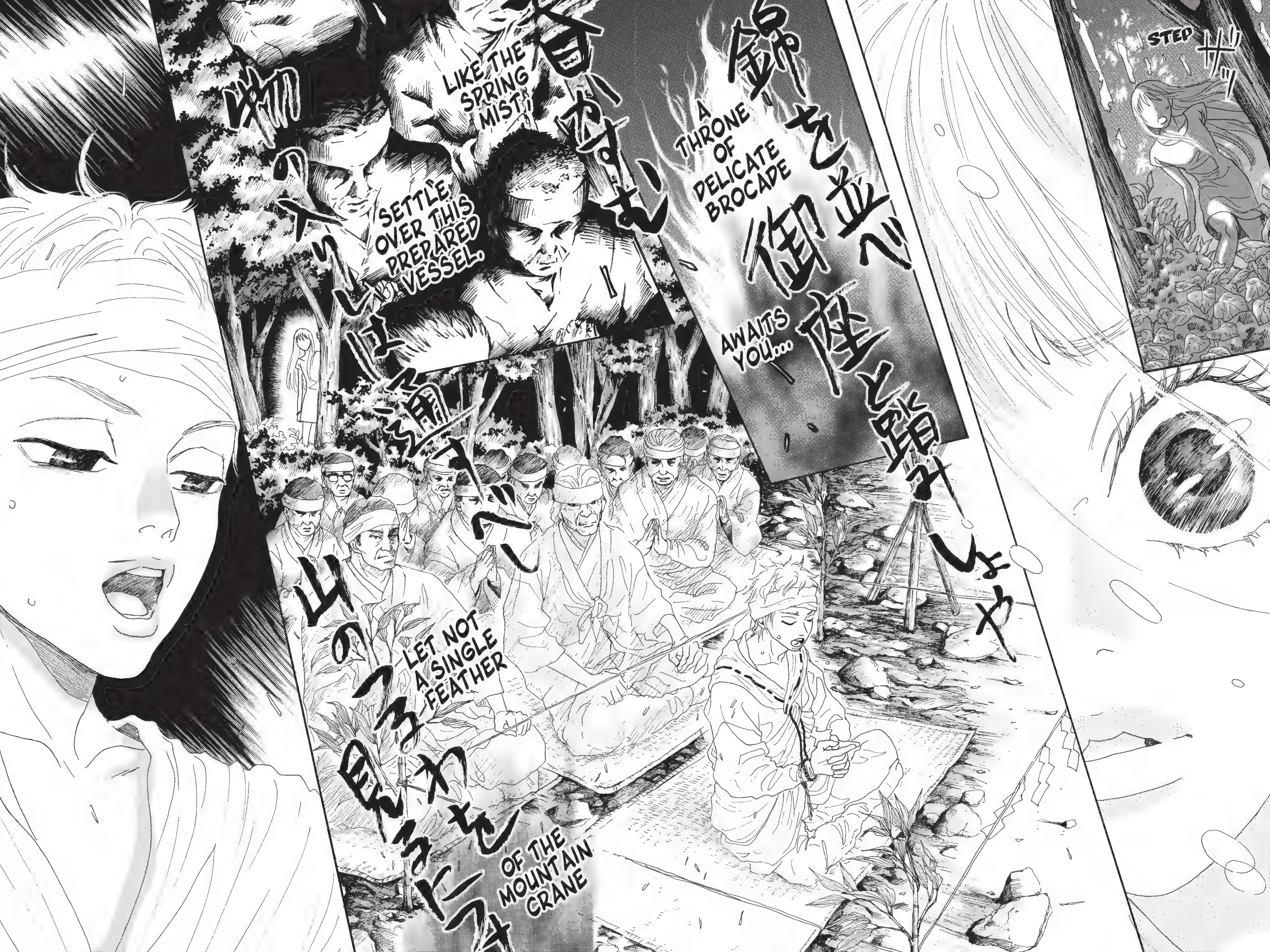

WEEEEP
WEEP WEEP WEEP
THE HIGH PRIESTESS...
THEY SAY SHE'D LET THE GODS POSSESS HER AN' SPEAK THEIR WORDS THROUGH HER.
SHE WAS WHAT THEY CALL A "MEDIUM".
WEEEEP
HER WORDS WERE TRUE ENOUGH T' MAKE YOU SHIVER.
THE FOLK 'ROUND HERE RESPECTED AND RELIED ON THOSE WORDS.
WHAT SHE ORDERED...
...WHAT THE HASEGAWA CLAN ORDERED WAS UNTHINKABLE TO DEFY.
THE PROSPERITY OF THE CLAN ROSE AND FELL WITH THEIR ABILITY TO PRODUCE MEDIUMS...
...OR SO THE RUMORS SAID.
...
SO...
...DO THEY NOT HAVE ANY NOW?
ANY MEDIUMS.
WELL...
...I'VE HEARD THAT THE HASEGAWA'S PLAN TO REGAIN THE RESPECT OF THE COMMUNITY...
...RELIES ON THAT KOICHIRO BOY.

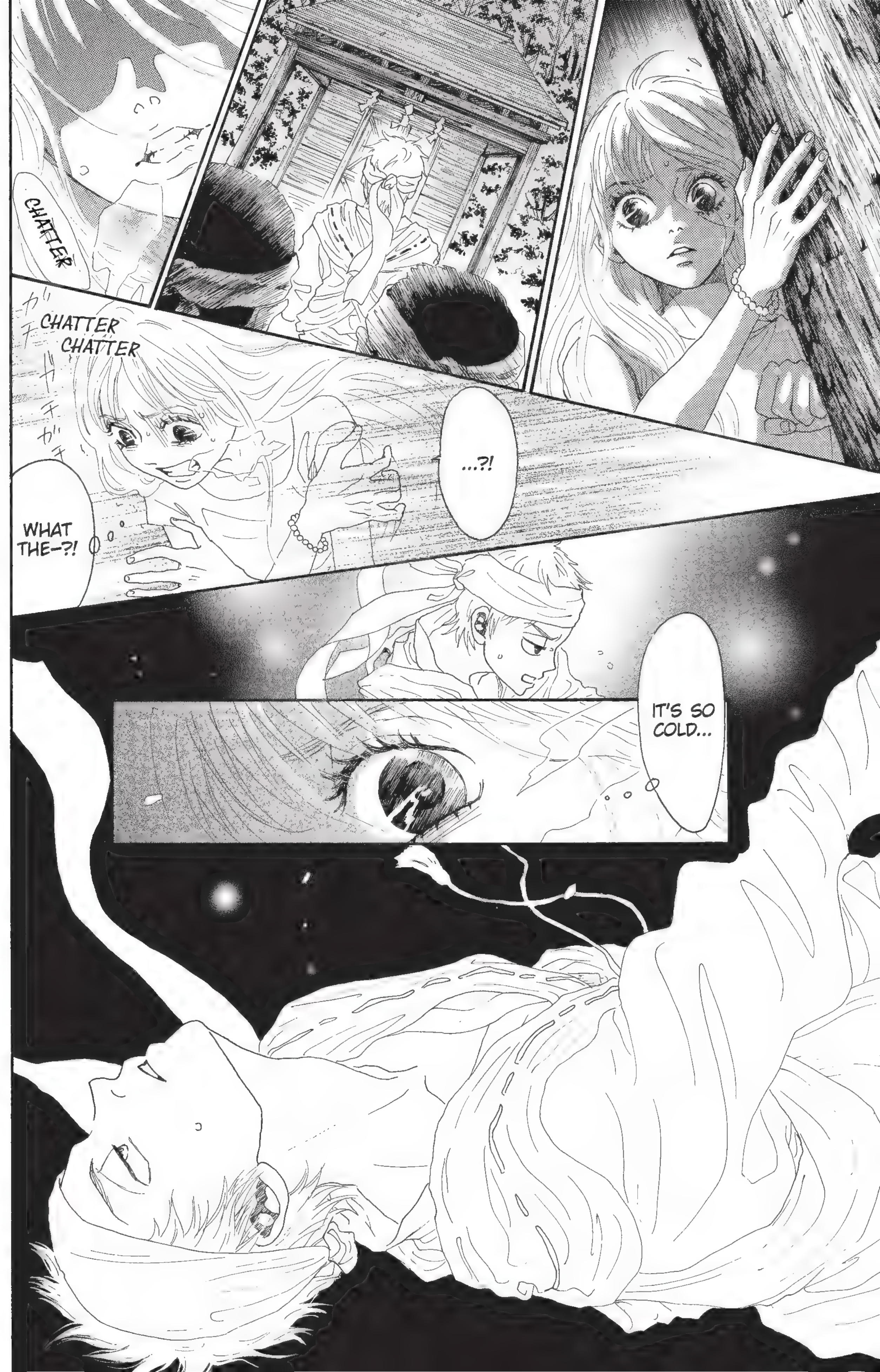

...
WOW...
THAT'S SOME HEAVY STUFF TO EXPECT OF KOU-CHAN...
"MAYBE, LIKE YOUR GRAND-MA..."
"...YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF SUPER-NATURAL P–"
THIP ザッ
THOP ザッ
THIP ザッ
THOP ザッ!
...
I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT...
WOOOOOOM ああああ
SHOCK ガタッ

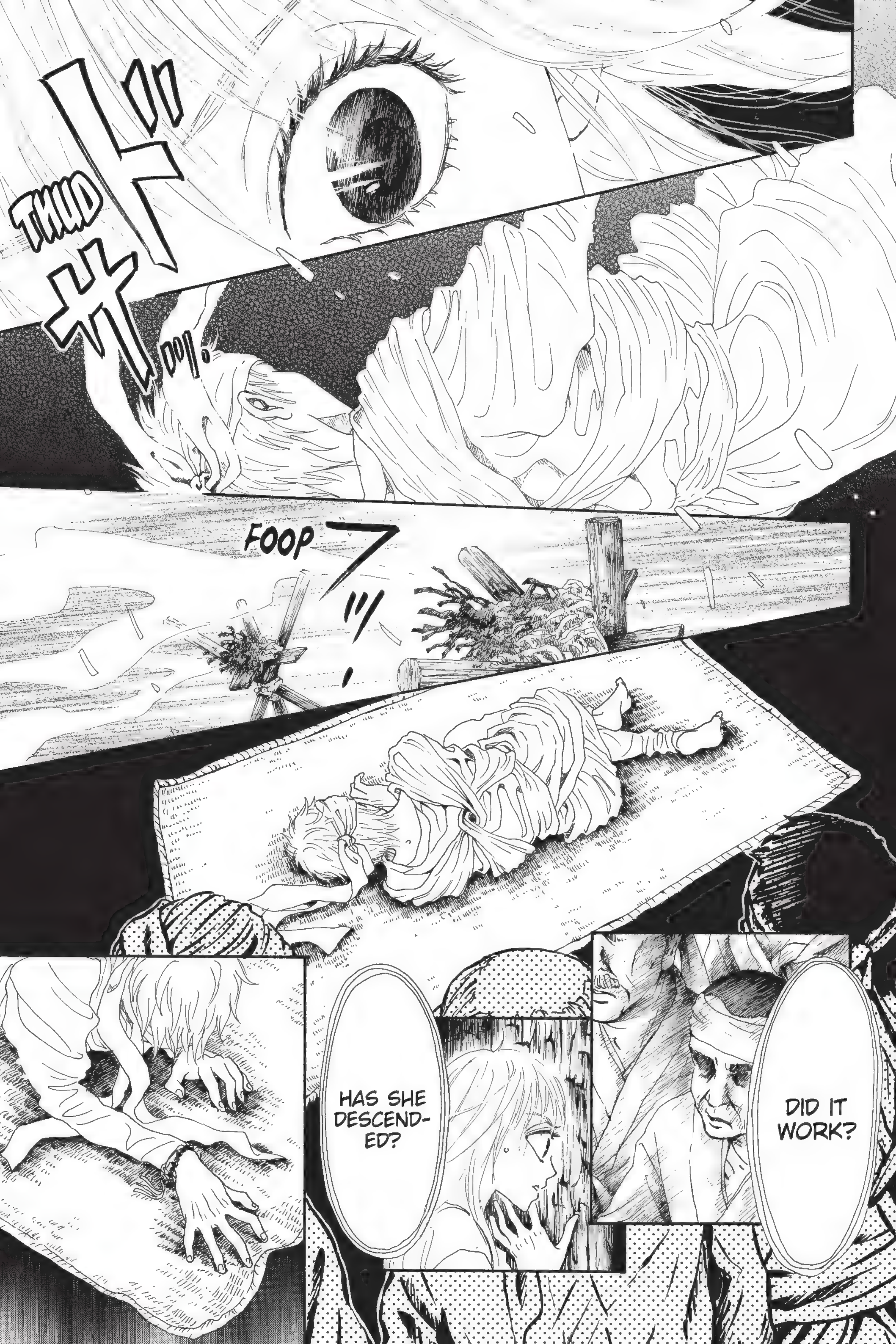


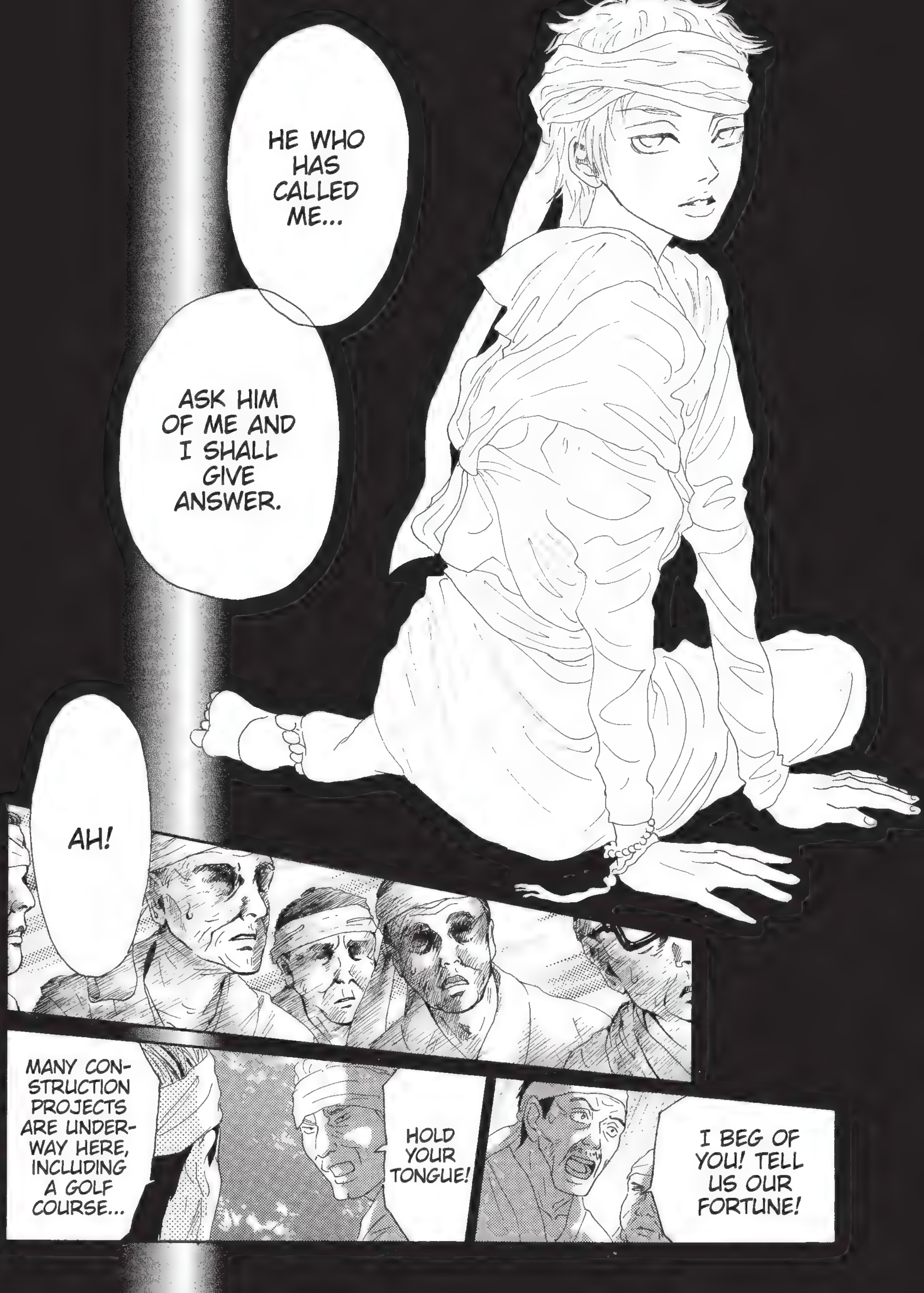

SHUUUSHHH
SHHHHHH
THIP
THOP
THIP
THIP ザッ
THOP ザッ
THIP ザッ!
ガサッ CRUNCH
ガッ! CRUNCH

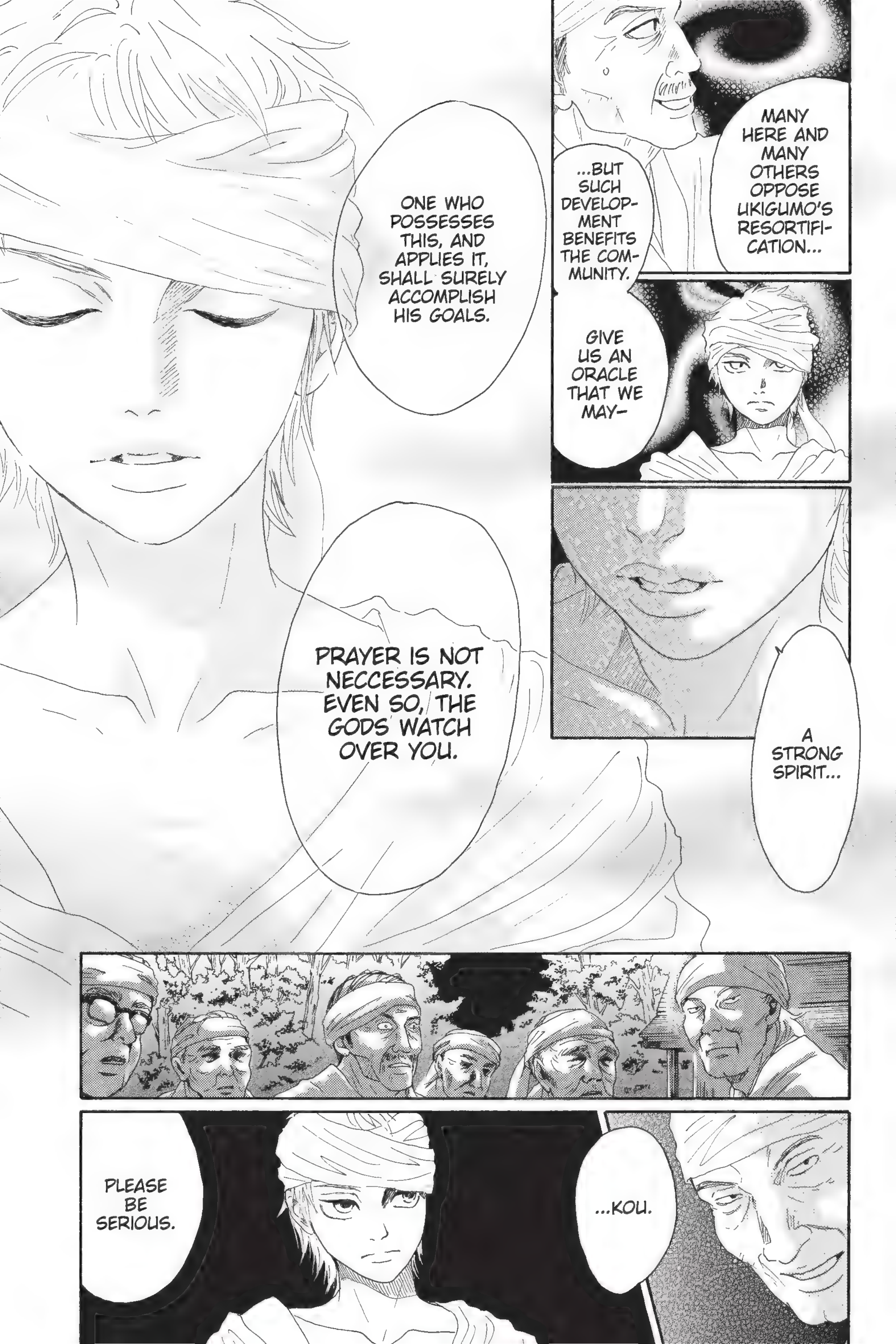

はぁ
はぁ
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?! THEY'RE SO FAST!
"THE ORACLE HAPPENS BENEATH THE FULL MOON..."
"...AT THE SHRINE OF MOONLIGHT."
降りたまへ
DESCEND UPON US...
降りたまへ
DESCEND UPON US...
降り居の庭には
WE HAVE PREPARED A PLACE FOR YOU.
綾を敷き
WE HAVE WOVEN A CLOTH...
ザリッ
STEP

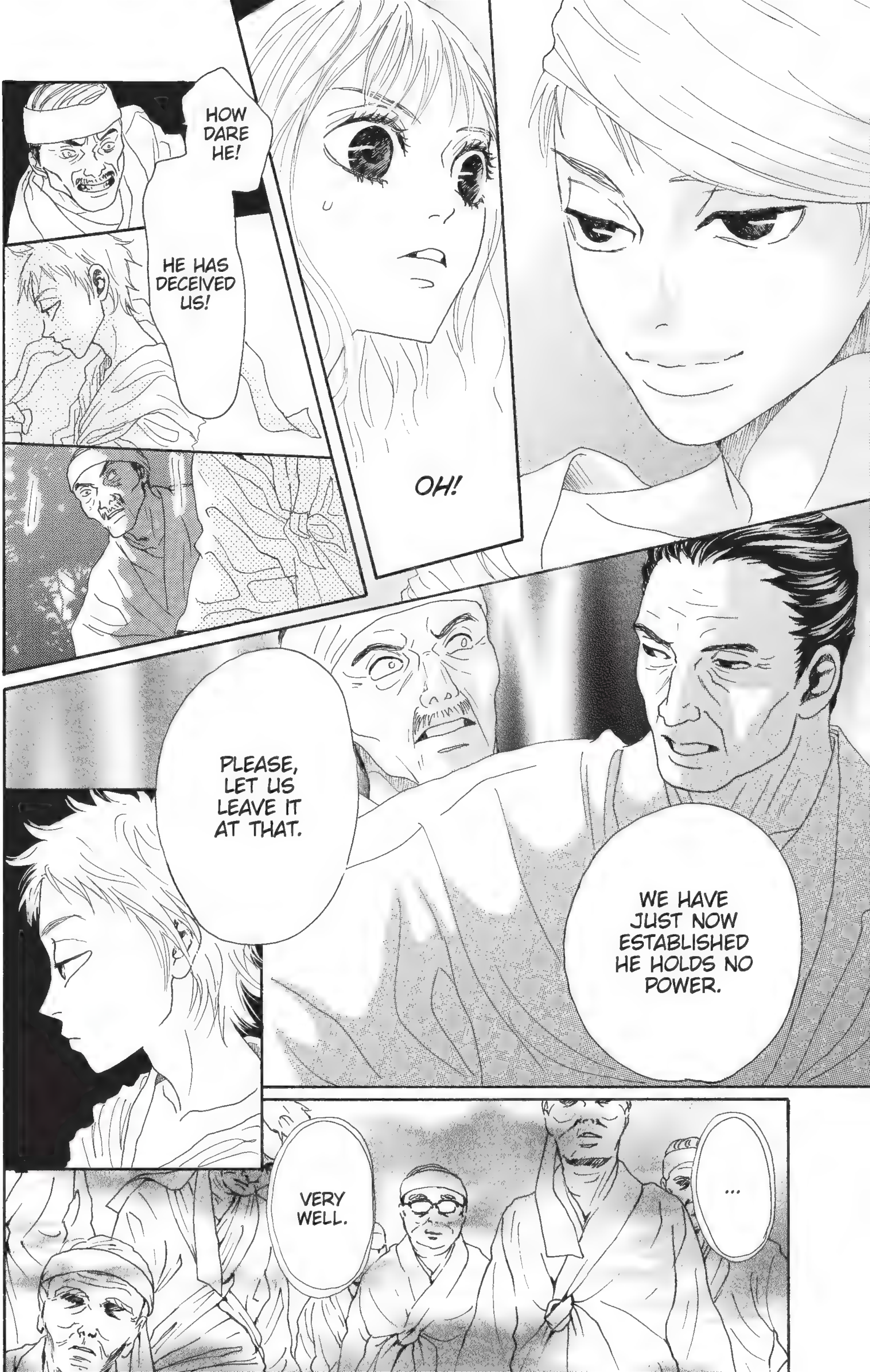

STEP
ザッ
錦を並べ御座と踏みしょや
A THRONE OF DELICATE BROCADE
AWAITS YOU...
かすみ、
LIKE THE SPRING MIST
物のえりしは通すべし
SETTLE OVER THIS PREPARED VESSEL.
山のつる
LET NOT A SINGLE FEATHER
OF THE MOUNTAIN CRANE

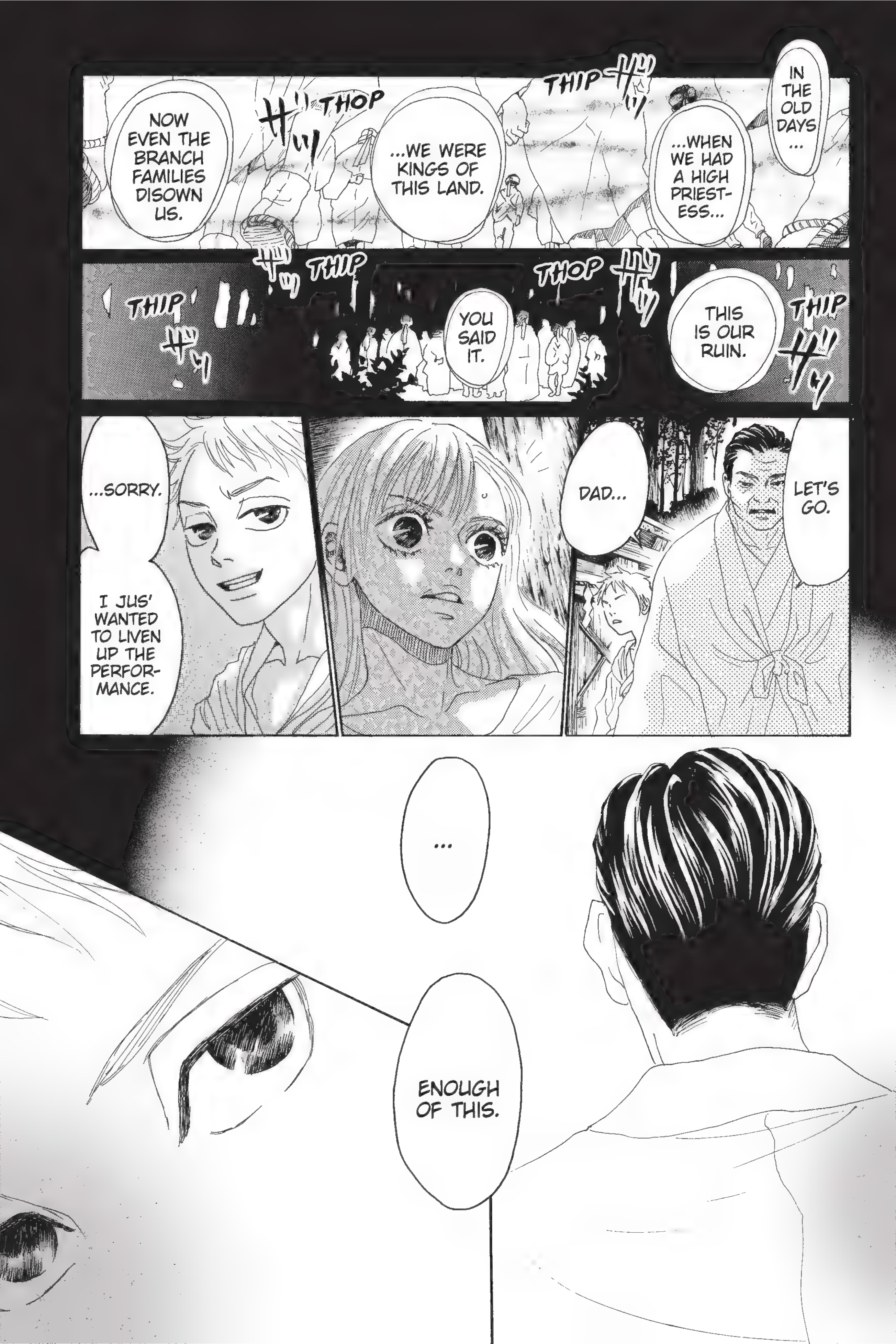

CHATTER
...?!
WHAT THE-?!
CHATTER CHATTER
ガチ
ガチガチ
IT'S SO COLD...

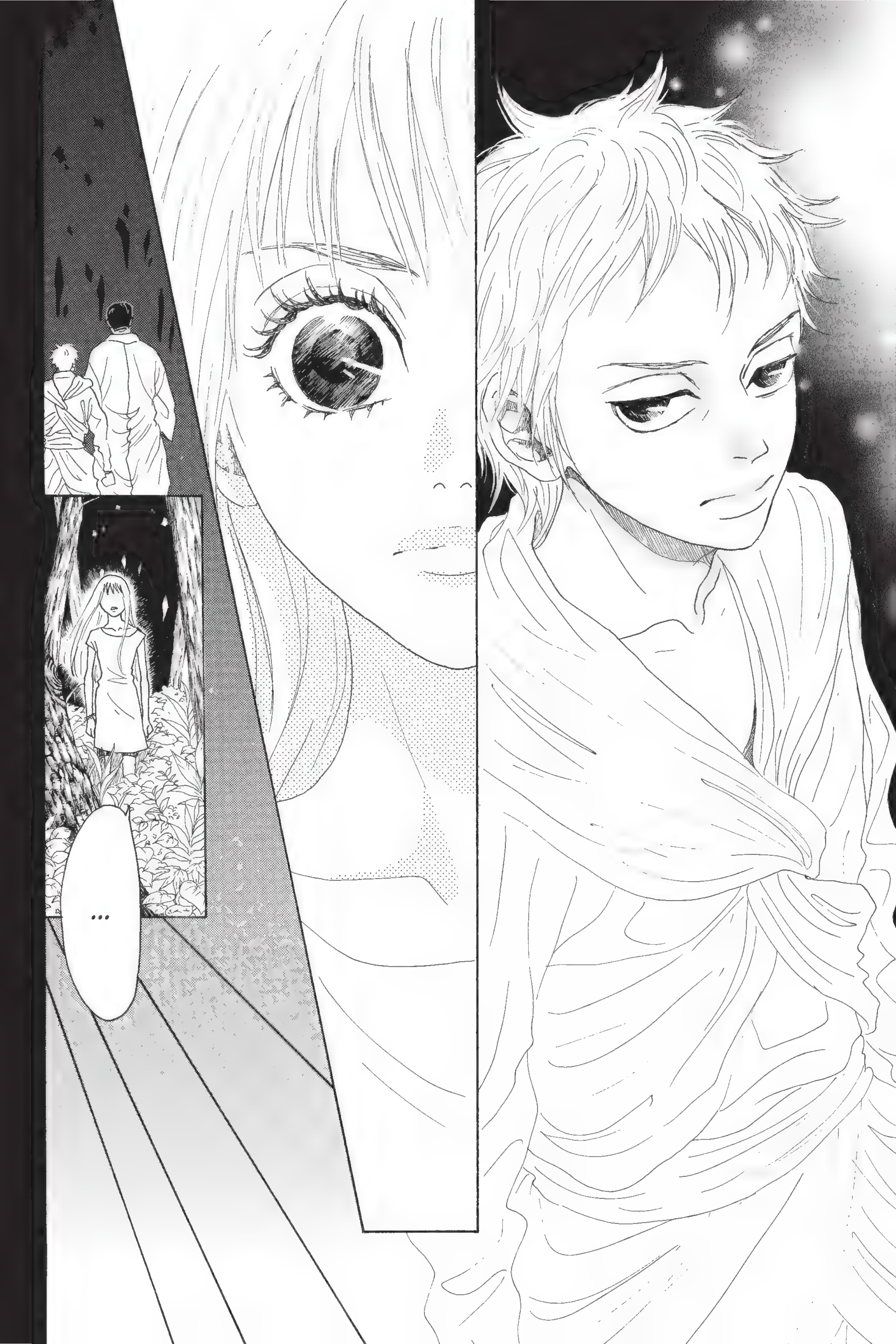

THUD
ドサッ
FOOP
フッ
DID IT WORK?
HAS SHE DESCENDED?

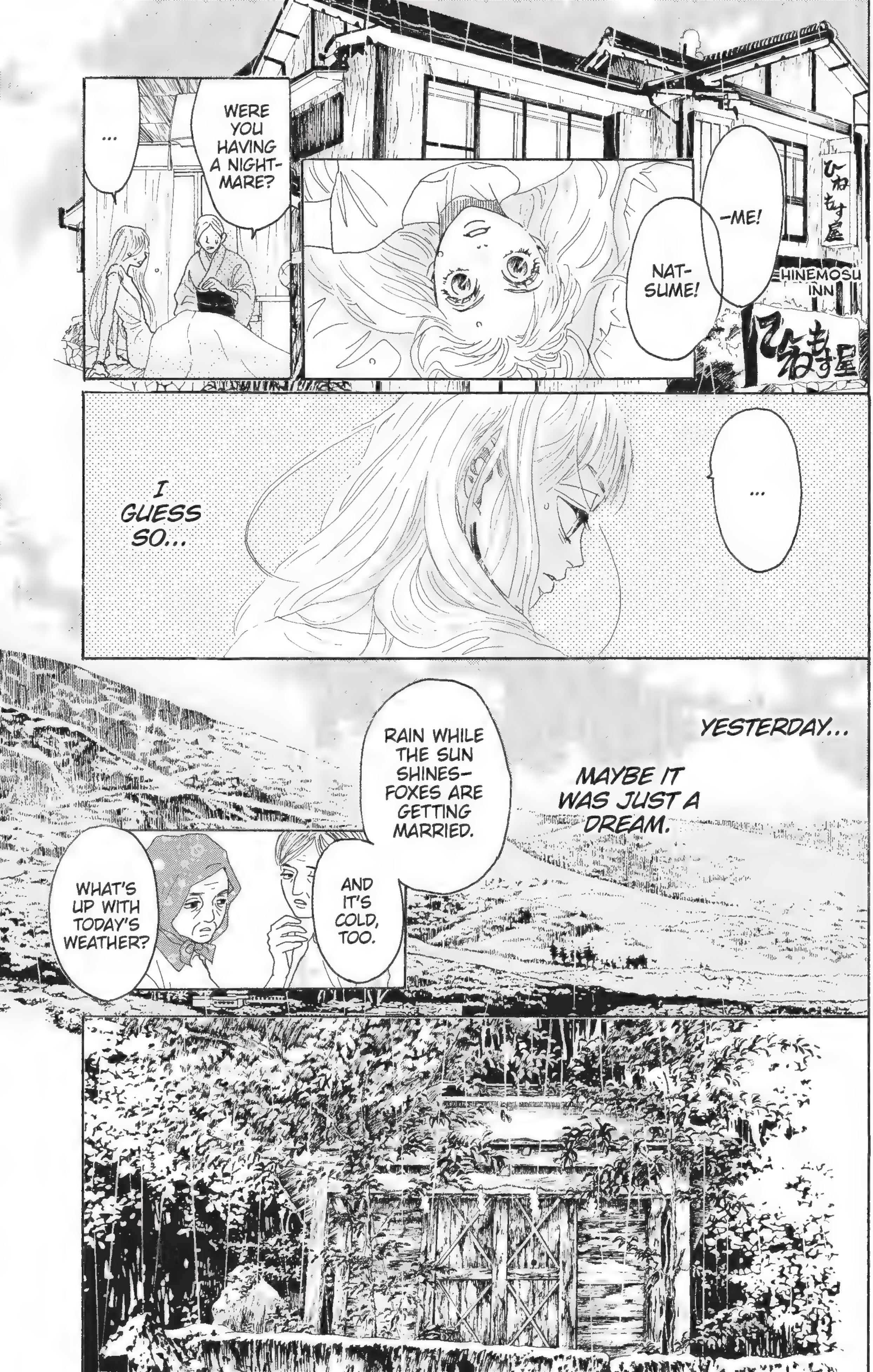

HE WHO HAS CALLED ME...
ASK HIM OF ME AND I SHALL GIVE ANSWER.
AH!
I BEG OF YOU! TELL US OUR FORTUNE!
HOLD YOUR TONGUE!
MANY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ARE UNDERWAY HERE, INCLUDING A GOLF COURSE...

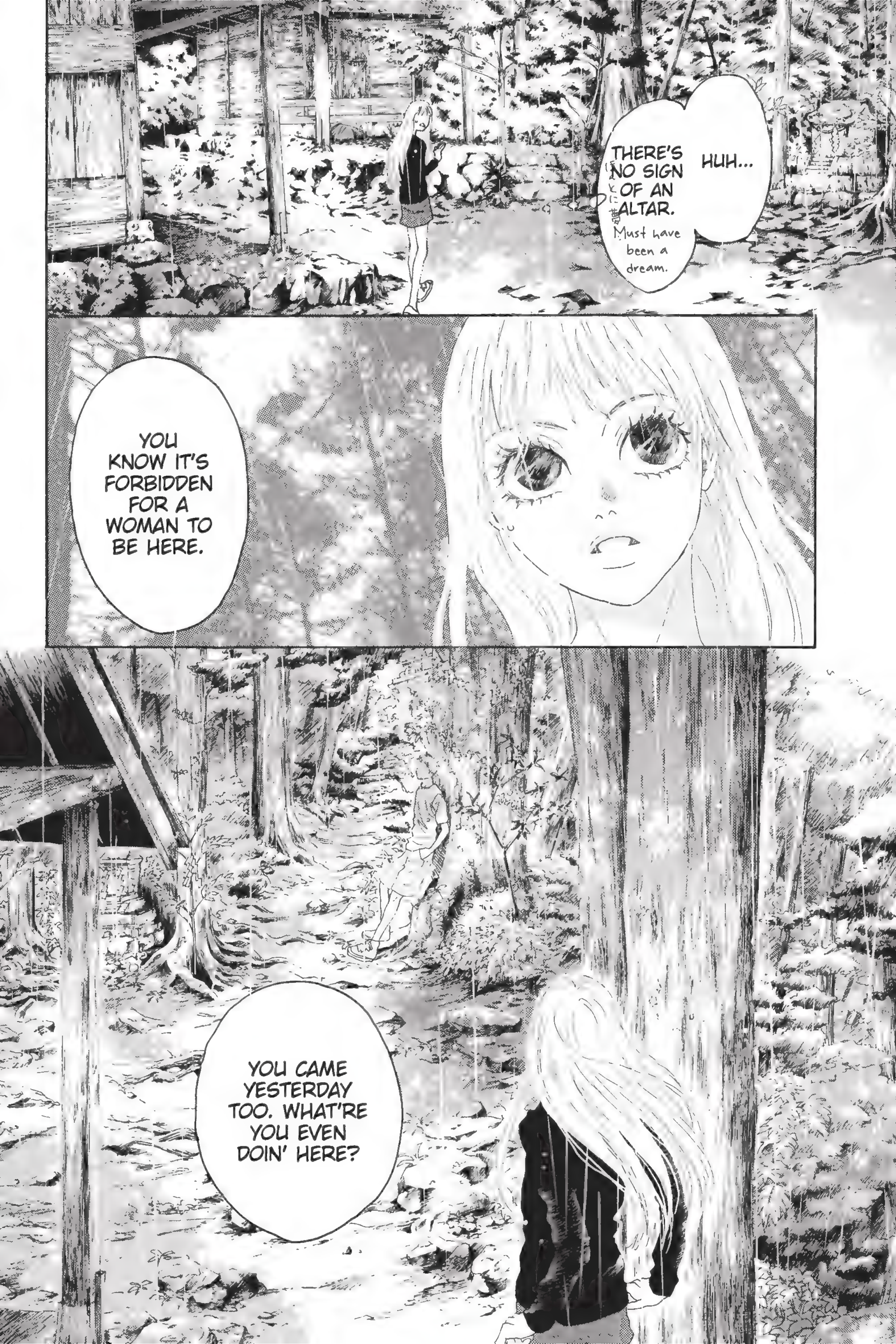

MANY HERE AND MANY OTHERS OPPOSE UKIGUMO'S RESORTIFICATION...
...BUT SUCH DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS THE COMMUNITY.
GIVE US AN ORACLE THAT WE MAY-
A STRONG SPIRIT...
ONE WHO POSSESSES THIS, AND APPLIES IT, SHALL SURELY ACCOMPLISH HIS GOALS.
PRAYER IS NOT NECCESSARY. EVEN SO, THE GODS WATCH OVER YOU.
...KOU.
PLEASE BE SERIOUS.

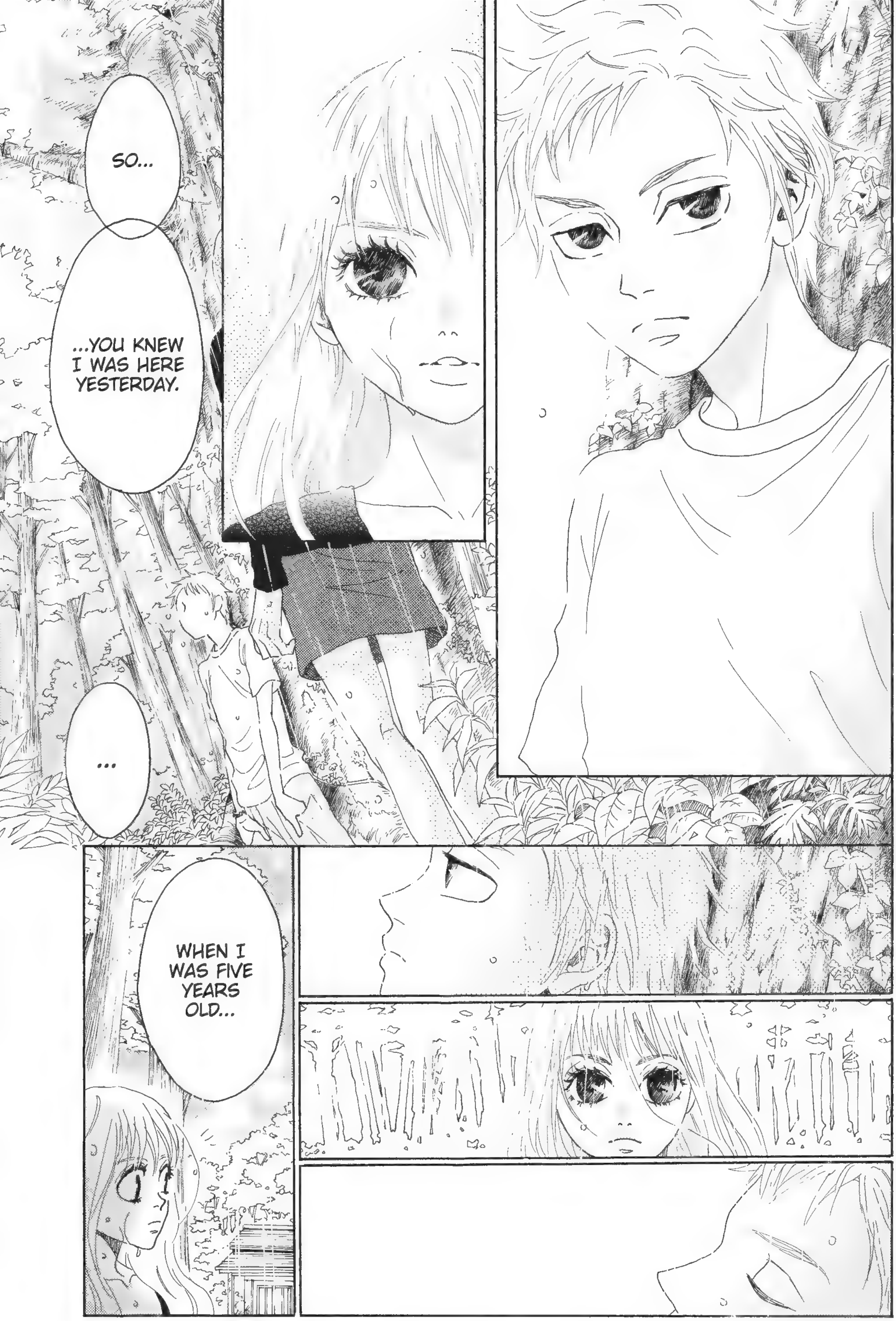

OH!
HOW DARE HE!
HE HAS DECEIVED US!
WE HAVE JUST NOW ESTABLISHED HE HOLDS NO POWER.
PLEASE, LET US LEAVE IT AT THAT.
...
VERY WELL.

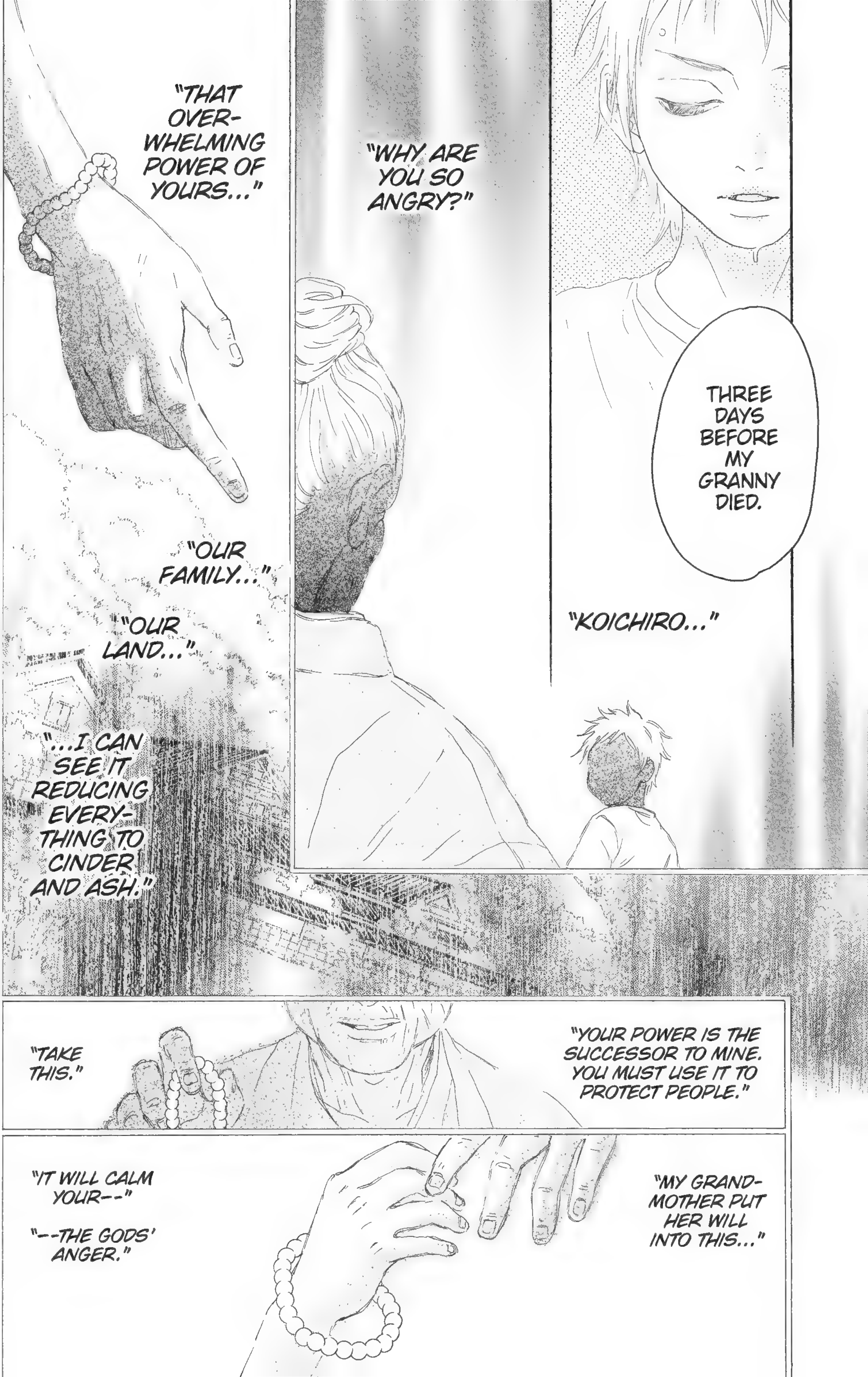

IN THE OLD DAYS...
...WHEN WE HAD A HIGH PRIESTESS...
THIP ザッ
...WE WERE KINGS OF THIS LAND.
ザッ THOP
NOW EVEN THE BRANCH FAMILIES DISOWN US.
THIP ザッ
THIS IS OUR RUIN.
THOP ザッ
YOU SAID IT.
ザッ THIP
THIP ザッ
LET'S GO.
DAD...
...SORRY.
I JUS' WANTED TO LIVEN UP THE PERFORMANCE.
...
ENOUGH OF THIS.

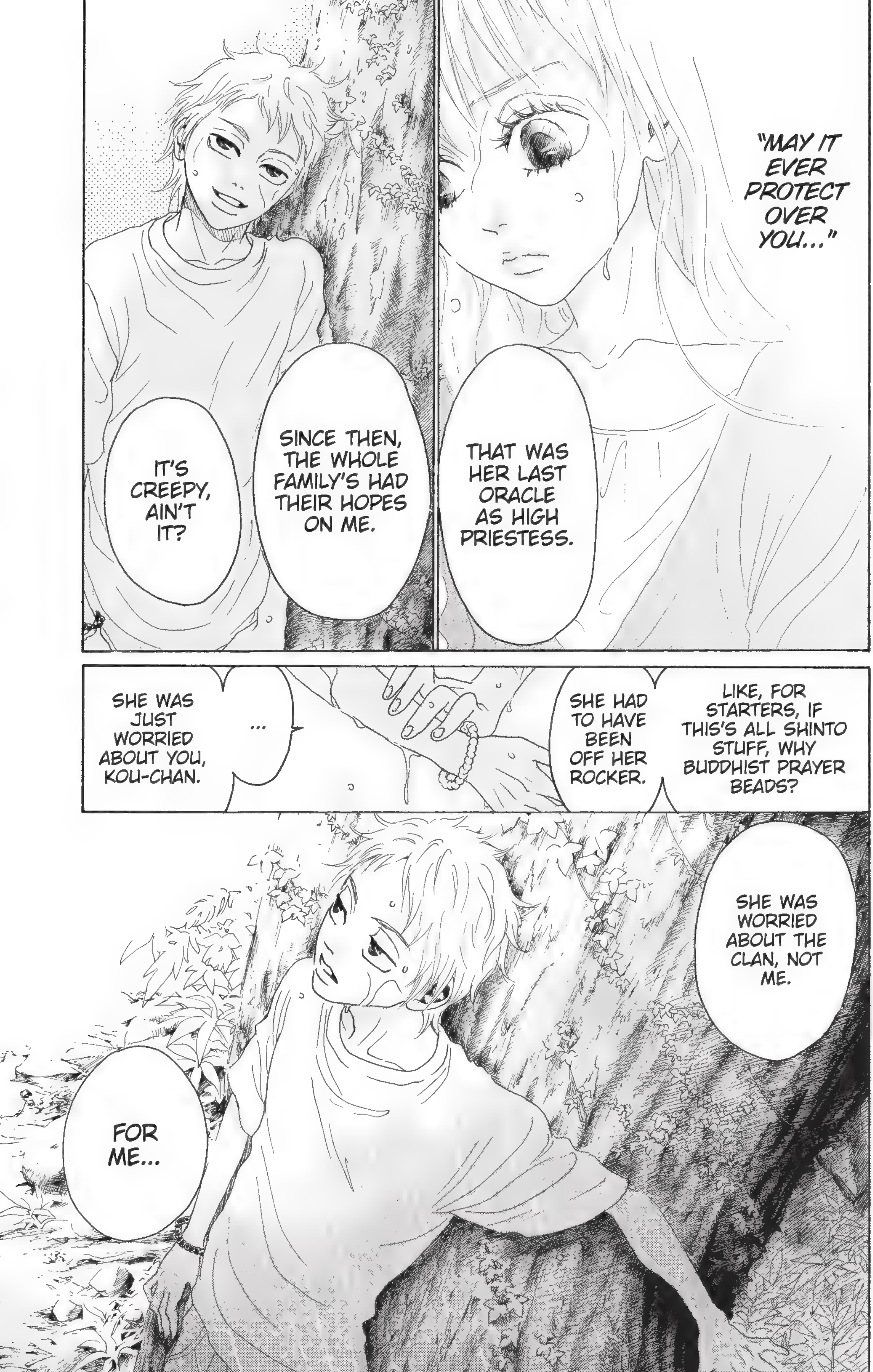


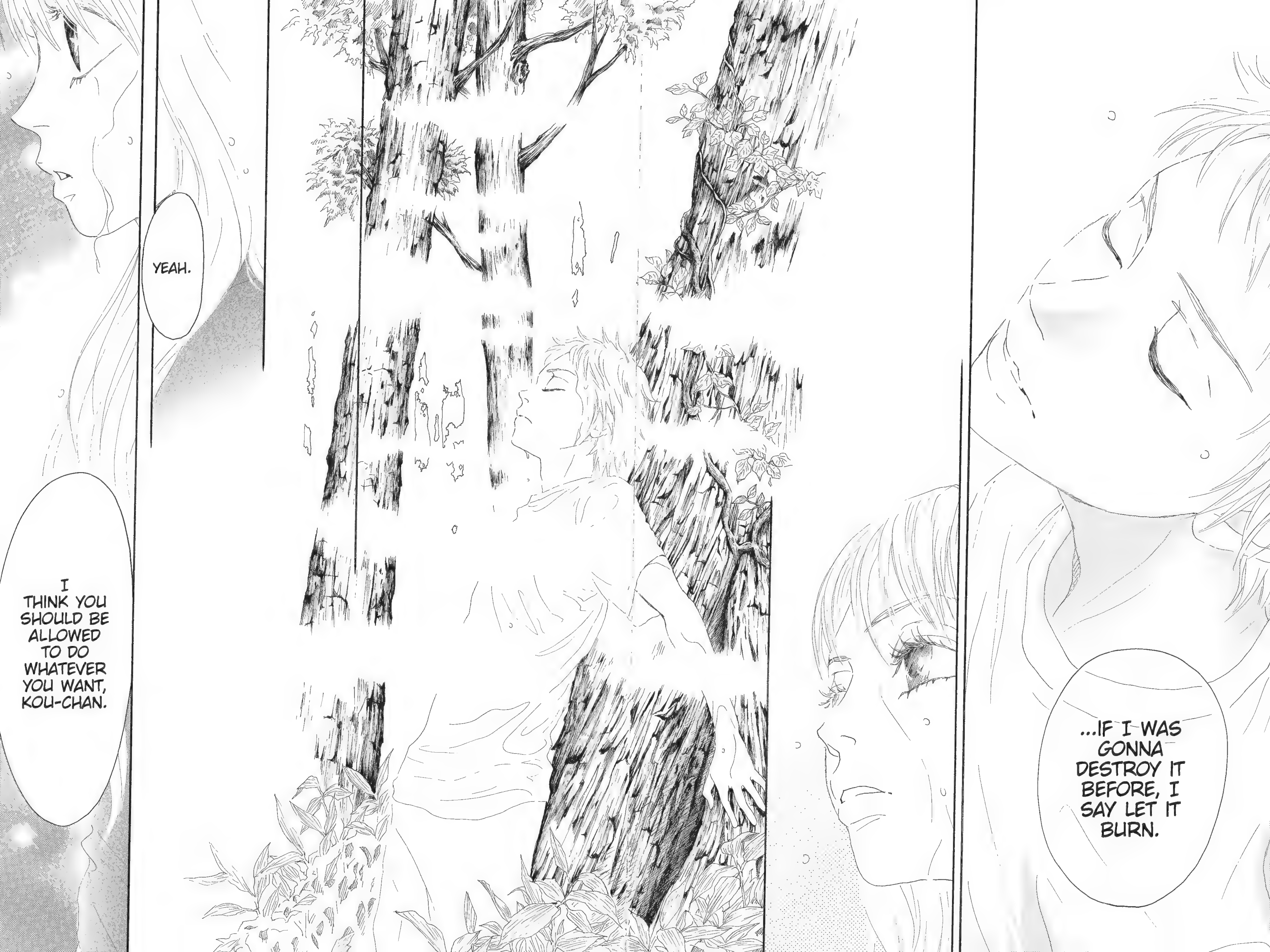

ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN
ひねもす屋
NAT-SUME!
-ME!
WERE YOU HAVING A NIGHT-MARE?
...
...
I GUESS SO...
YESTERDAY...
MAYBE IT WAS JUST A DREAM.
RAIN WHILE THE SUN SHINES—FOXES ARE GETTING MARRIED.
AND IT'S COLD, TOO.
WHAT'S UP WITH TODAY'S WEATHER?

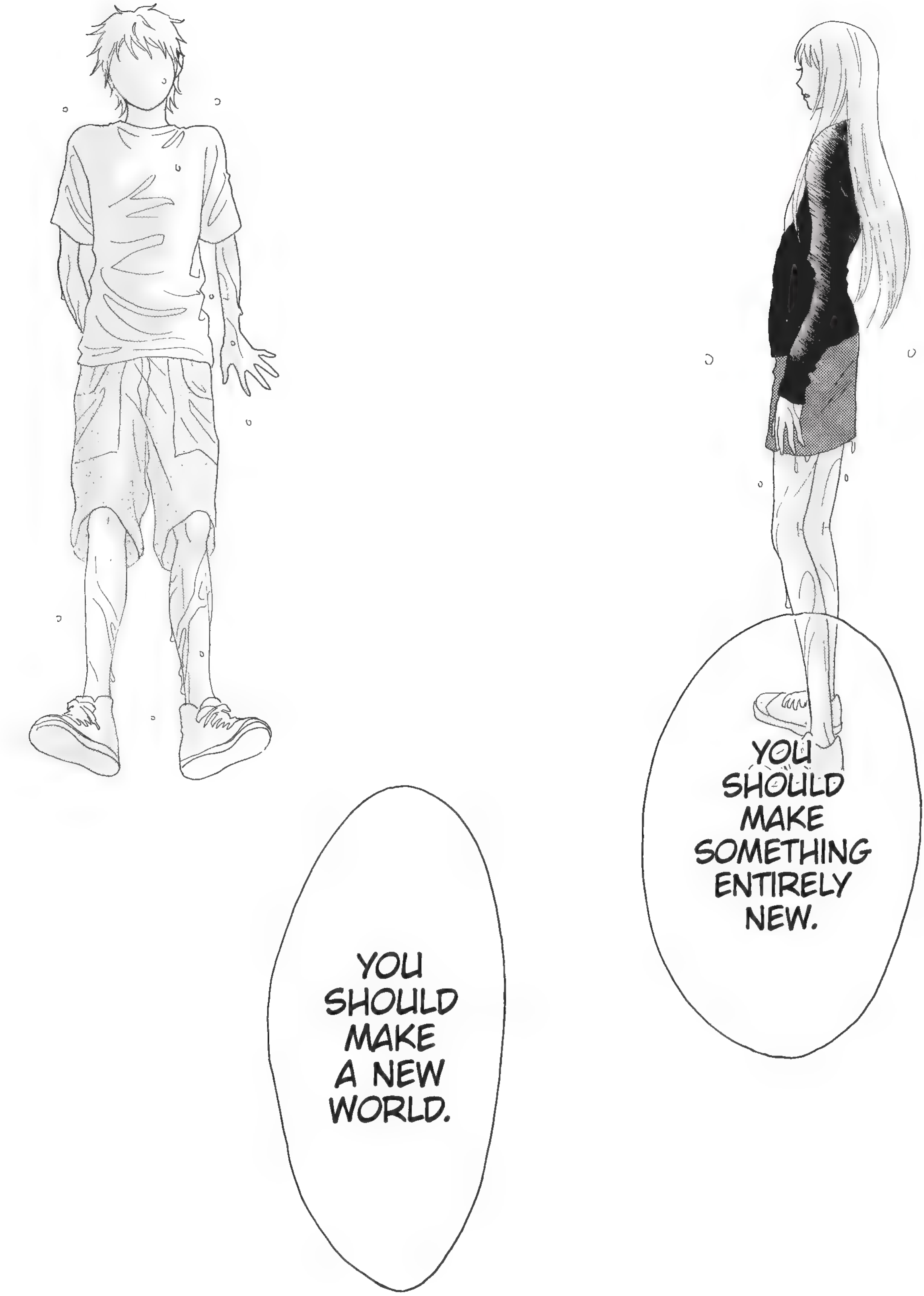

HUH...
THERE'S NO SIGN OF AN ALTAR.
ほんとに夢
Must have been a dream.
YOU KNOW IT'S FORBIDDEN FOR A WOMAN TO BE HERE.
YOU CAME YESTERDAY TOO. WHAT'RE YOU EVEN DOIN' HERE?

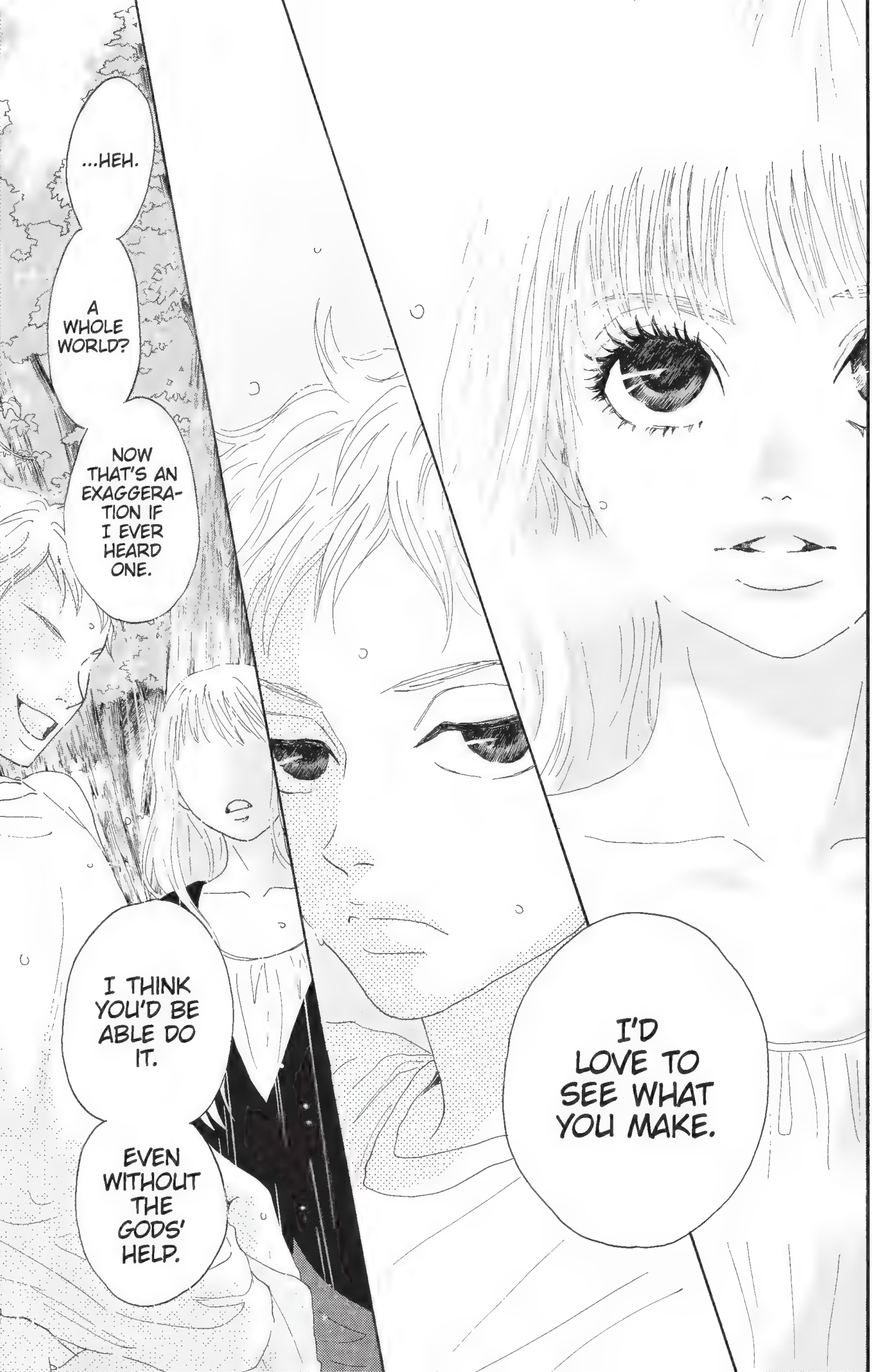

SO...
...YOU KNEW I WAS HERE YESTERDAY.
...
WHEN I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD...

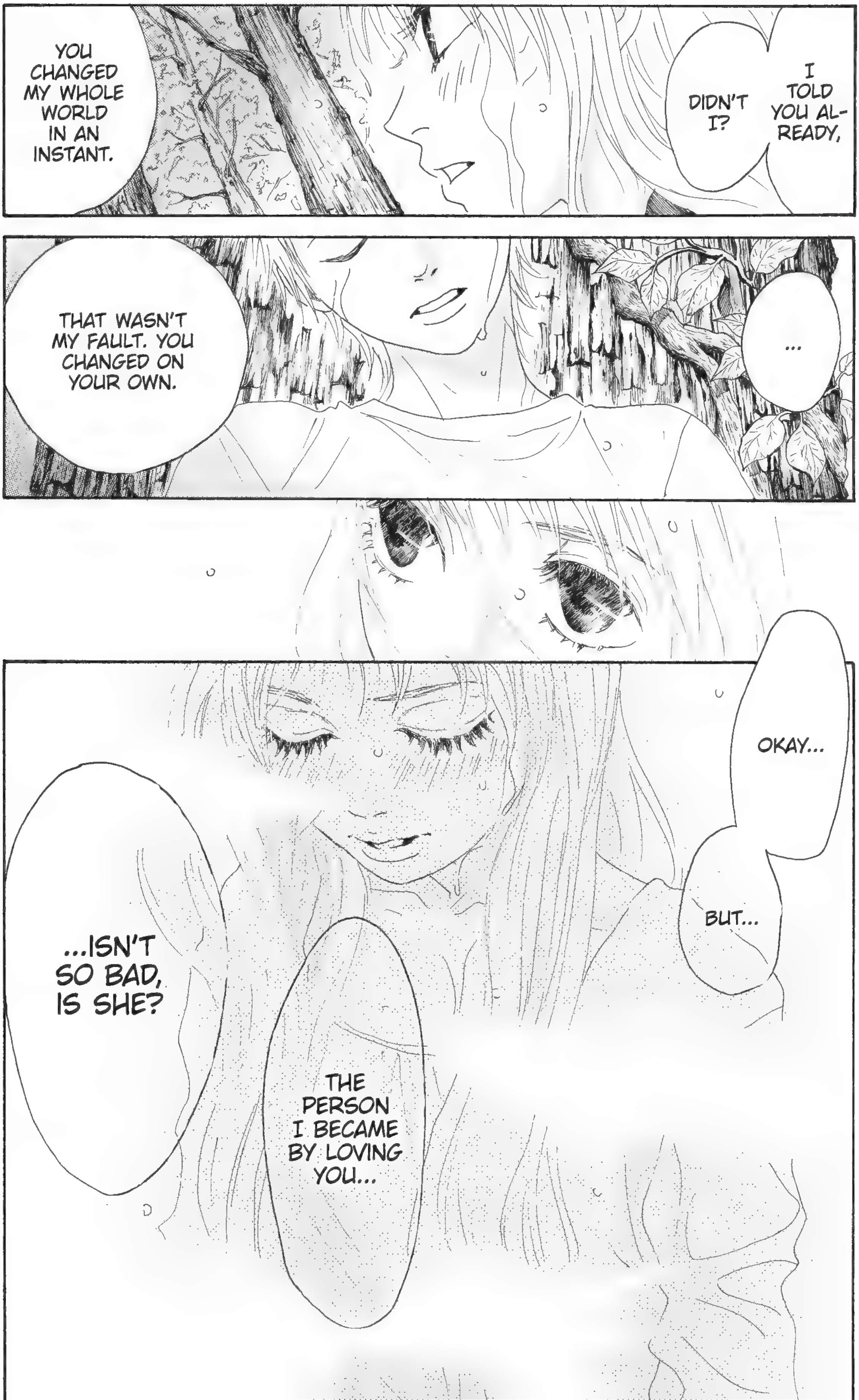

THREE DAYS BEFORE MY GRANNY DIED.
"KOICHIRO..."
"WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?"
"THAT OVERWHELMING POWER OF YOURS..."
"OUR FAMILY..."
"OUR LAND..."
"...I CAN SEE IT REDUCING EVERYTHING TO CINDER AND ASH."
"YOUR POWER IS THE SUCCESSOR TO MINE. YOU MUST USE IT TO PROTECT PEOPLE."
"TAKE THIS."
"MY GRANDMOTHER PUT HER WILL INTO THIS..."
"IT WILL CALM YOUR--"
"--THE GODS' ANGER."

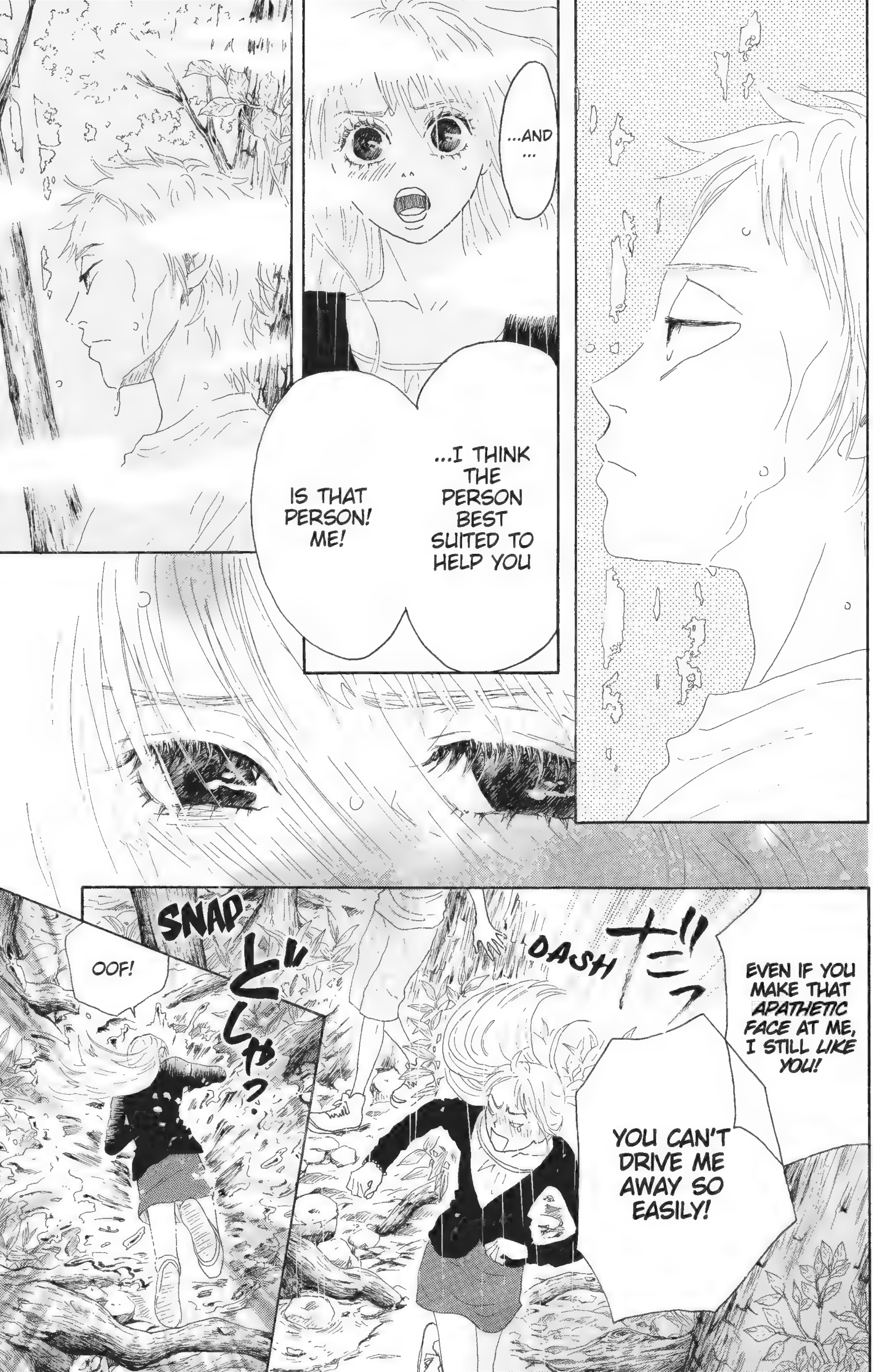

"MAY IT EVER PROTECT OVER YOU..."
THAT WAS HER LAST ORACLE AS HIGH PRIESTESS.
SINCE THEN, THE WHOLE FAMILY'S HAD THEIR HOPES ON ME.
IT'S CREEPY, AIN'T IT?
LIKE, FOR STARTERS, IF THIS'S ALL SHINTO STUFF, WHY BUDDHIST PRAYER BEADS?
SHE HAD TO HAVE BEEN OFF HER ROCKER.
...
SHE WAS JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU, KOU-CHAN.
SHE WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE CLAN, NOT ME.
FOR ME...

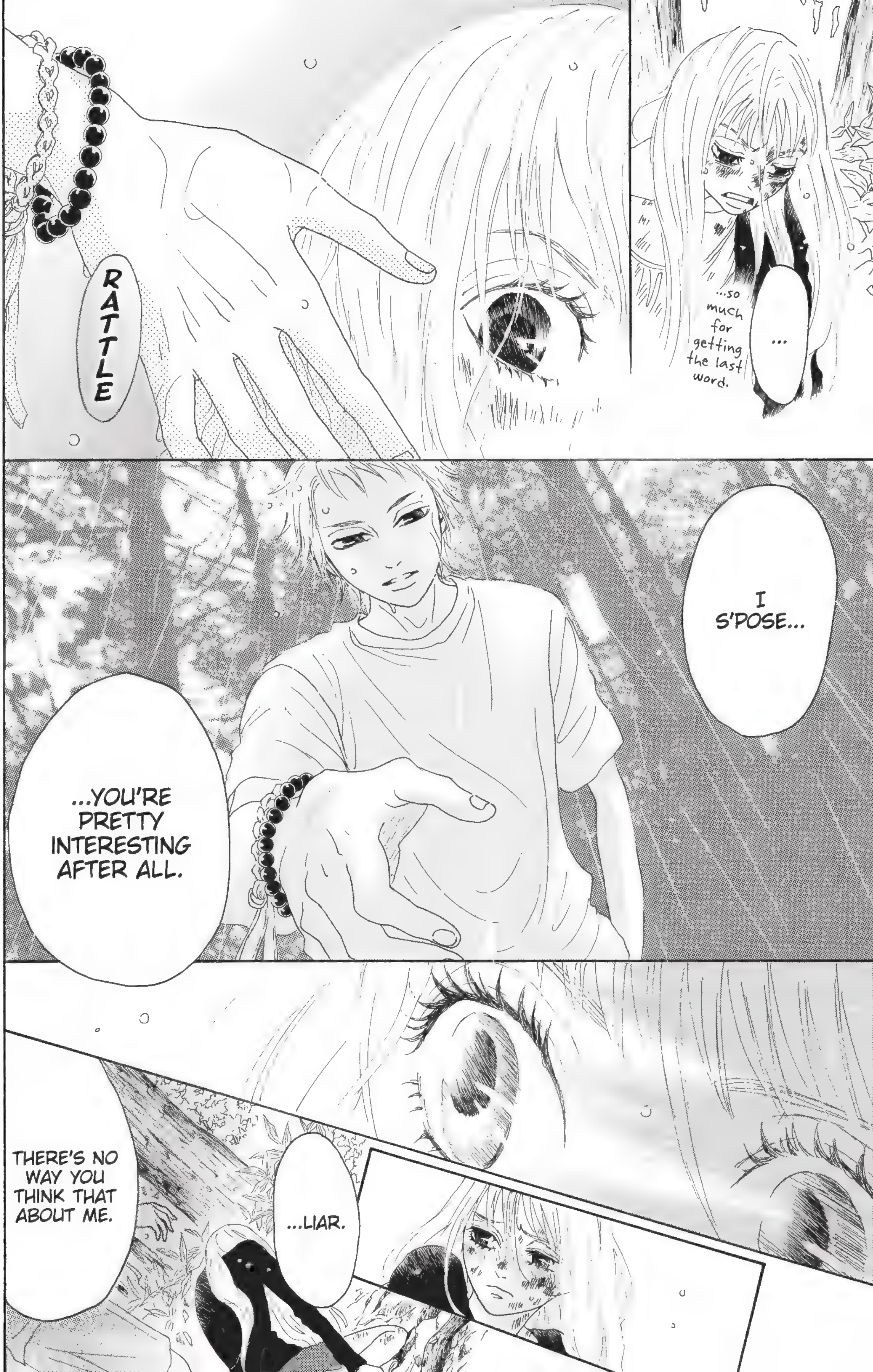

...IF I WAS GONNA DESTROY IT BEFORE, I SAY LET IT BURN.
YEAH.
I THINK YOU SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, KOU-CHAN.

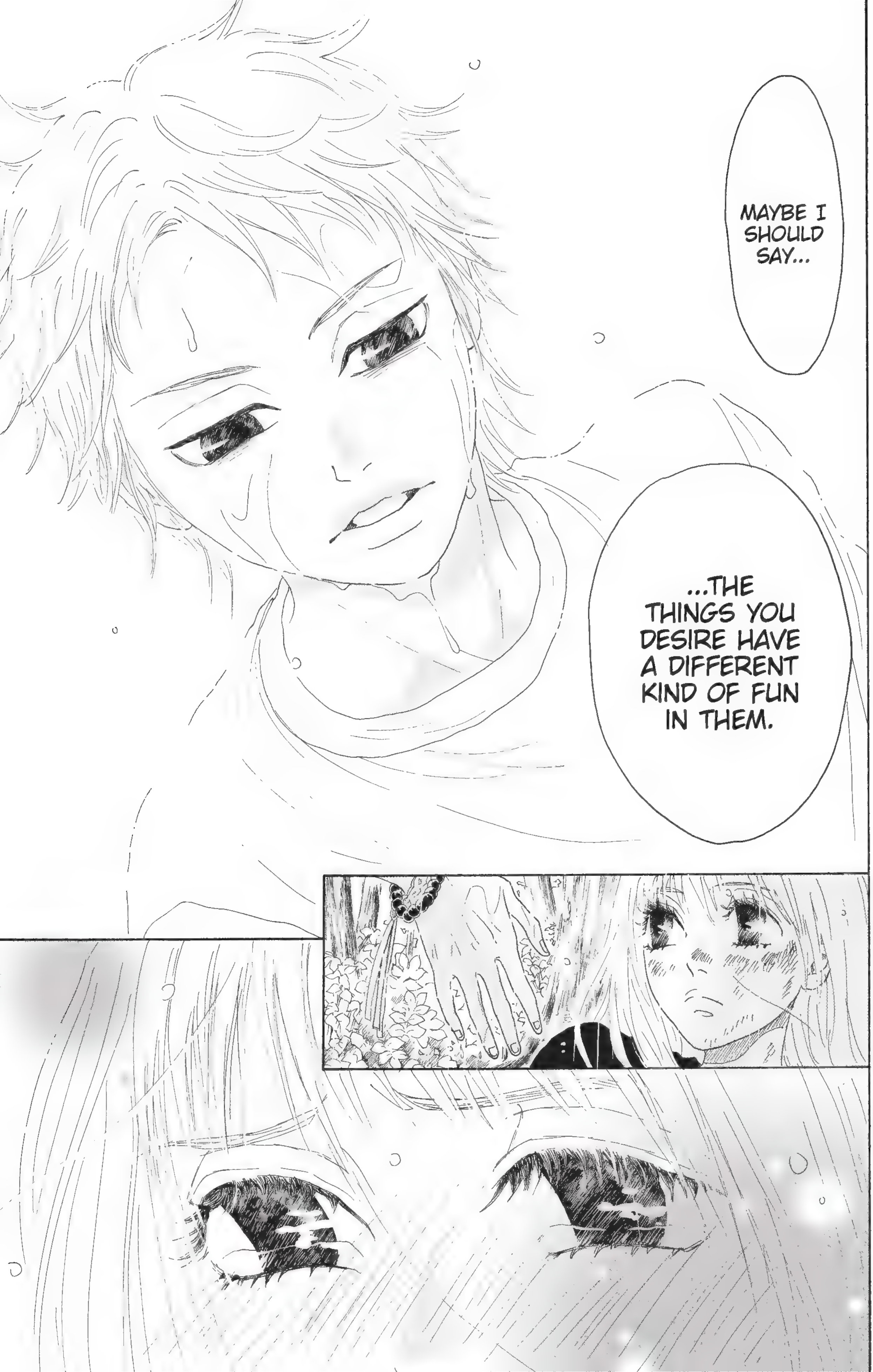

YOU SHOULD MAKE SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW.
YOU SHOULD MAKE A NEW WORLD.

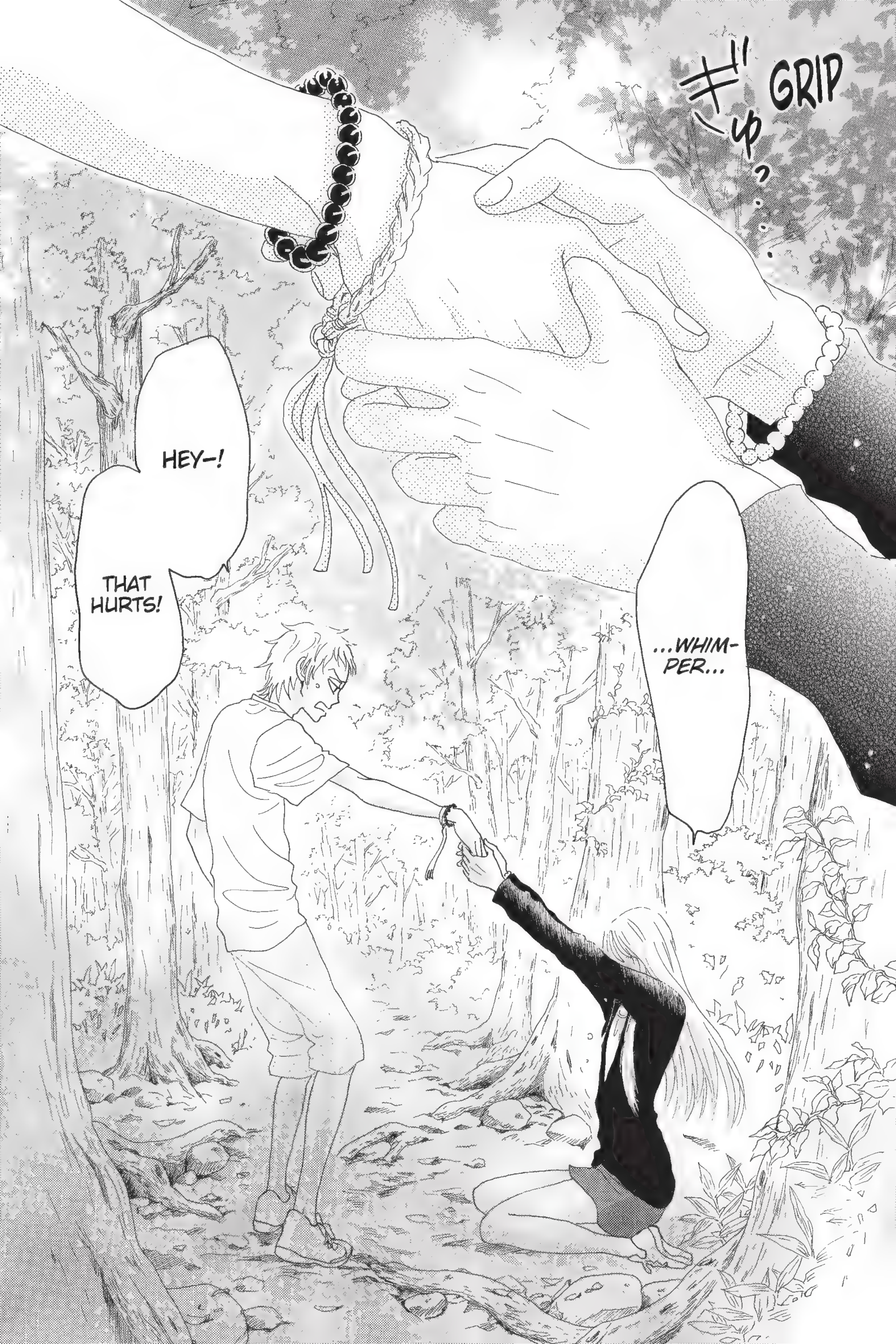

...HEH.
A WHOLE WORLD?
NOW THAT'S AN EXAGGERATION IF I EVER HEARD ONE.
I THINK YOU'D BE ABLE DO IT.
EVEN WITHOUT THE GODS' HELP.
I'D LOVE TO SEE WHAT YOU MAKE.


I TOLD YOU ALREADY, DIDN'T I?
YOU CHANGED MY WHOLE WORLD IN AN INSTANT.
...
THAT WASN'T MY FAULT. YOU CHANGED ON YOUR OWN.
OKAY...
BUT...
THE PERSON I BECAME BY LOVING YOU...
...ISN'T SO BAD, IS SHE?


...AND ...
...I THINK THE PERSON BEST SUITED TO HELP YOU
IS THAT PERSON! ME!
EVEN IF YOU MAKE THAT *APATHETIC FACE* AT ME, I STILL *LIKE YOU!*
YOU CAN'T DRIVE ME AWAY SO EASILY!
ダッ
DASH
SNAP
どしゃっ
OOF!

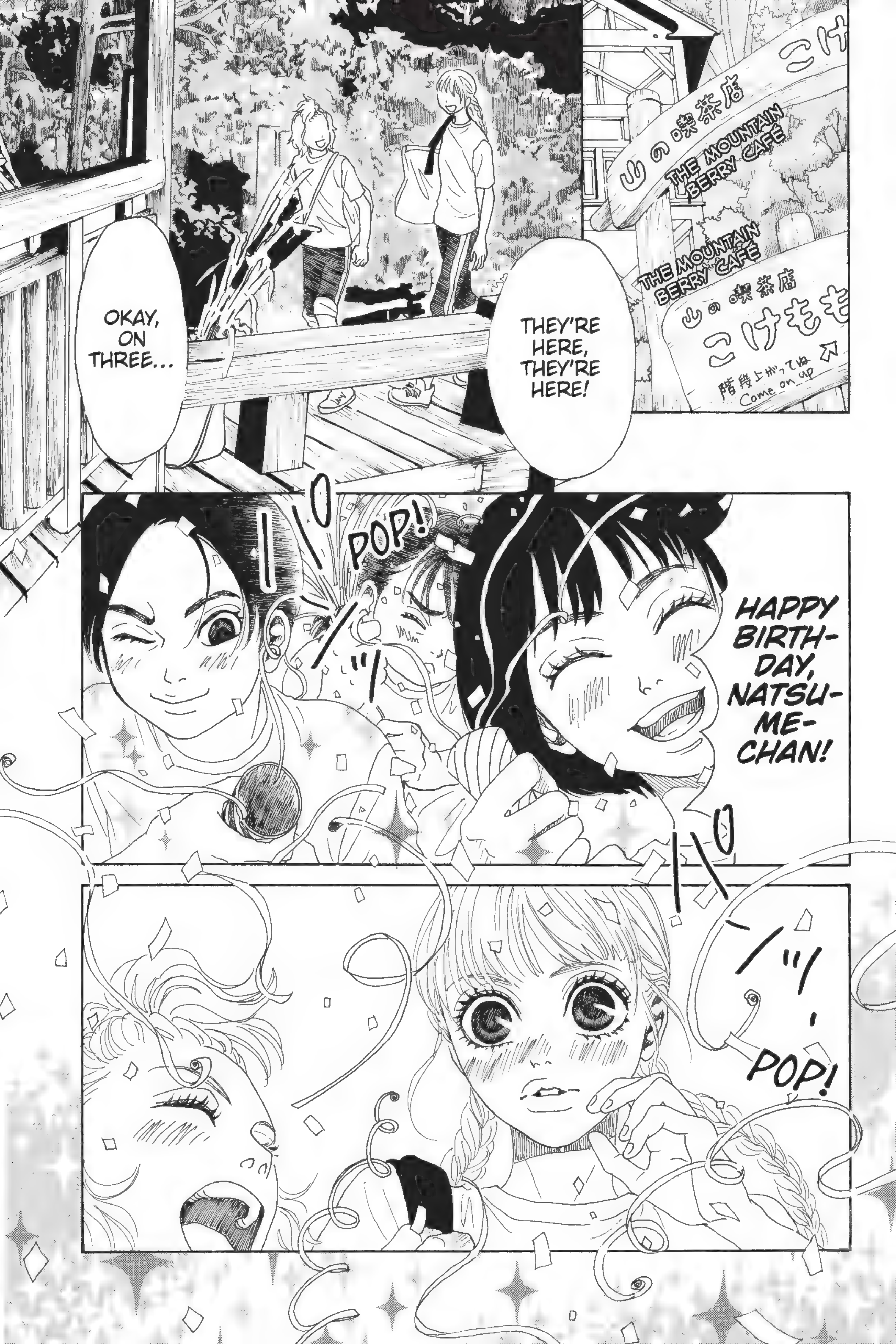

...
...so much for getting the last word.
RATTLE
I S'POSE...
...YOU'RE PRETTY INTERESTING AFTER ALL.
...LIAR.
THERE'S NO WAY YOU THINK THAT ABOUT ME.

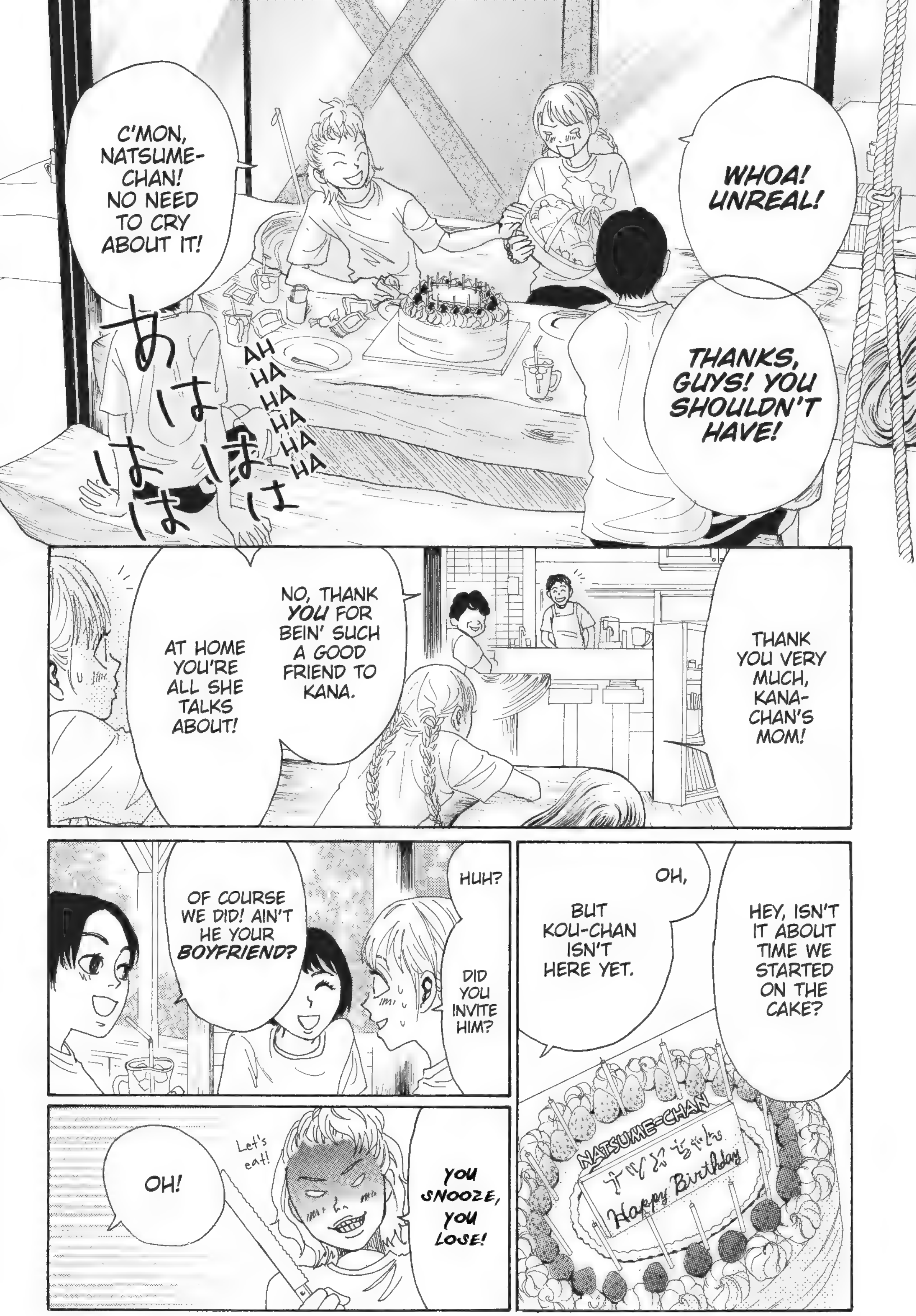

MAYBE I SHOULD SAY...
...THE THINGS YOU DESIRE HAVE A DIFFERENT KIND OF FUN IN THEM.

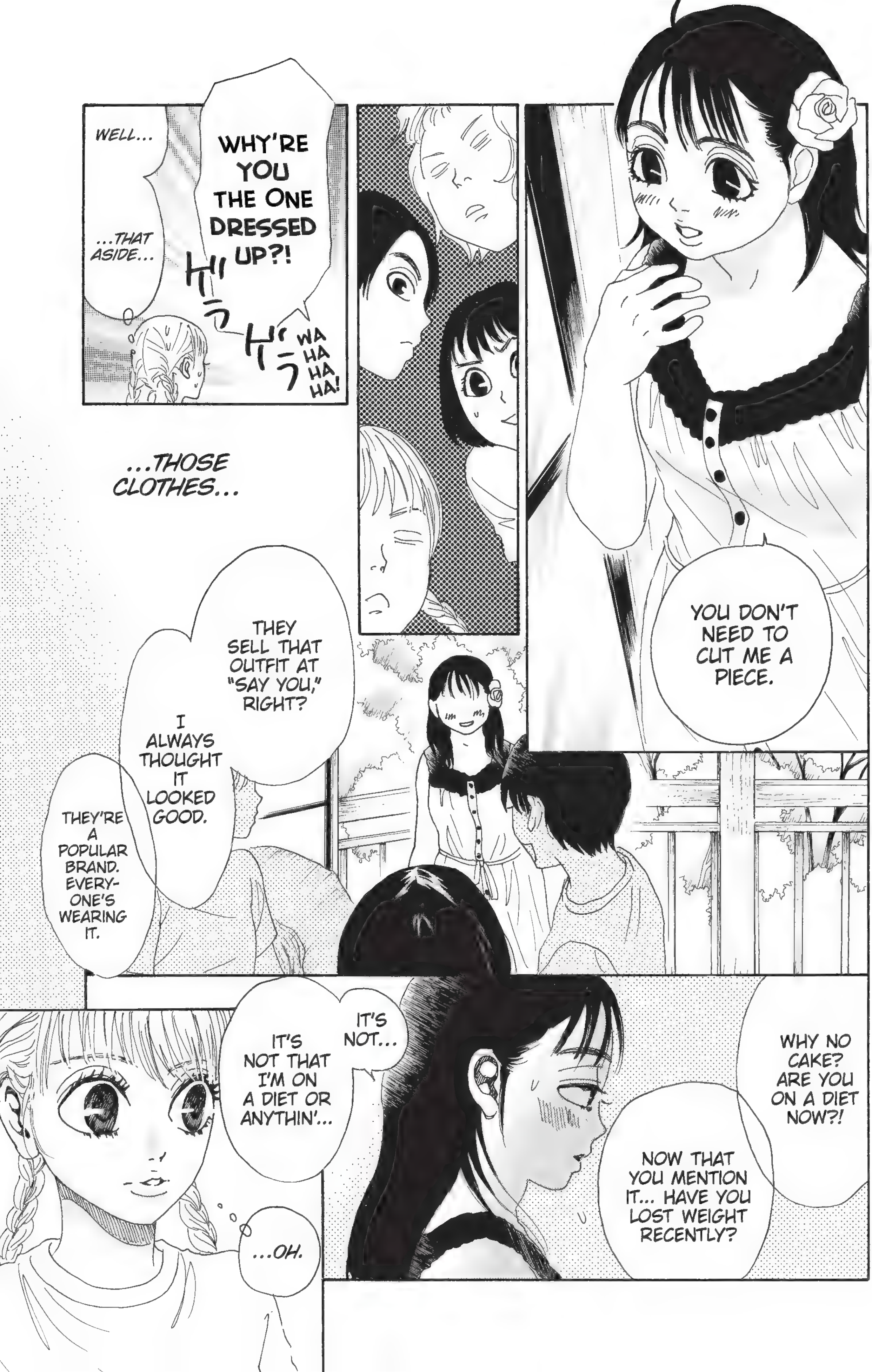

ぎゅっ…
GRIP
…WHIMPER…
HEY–!
THAT HURTS!

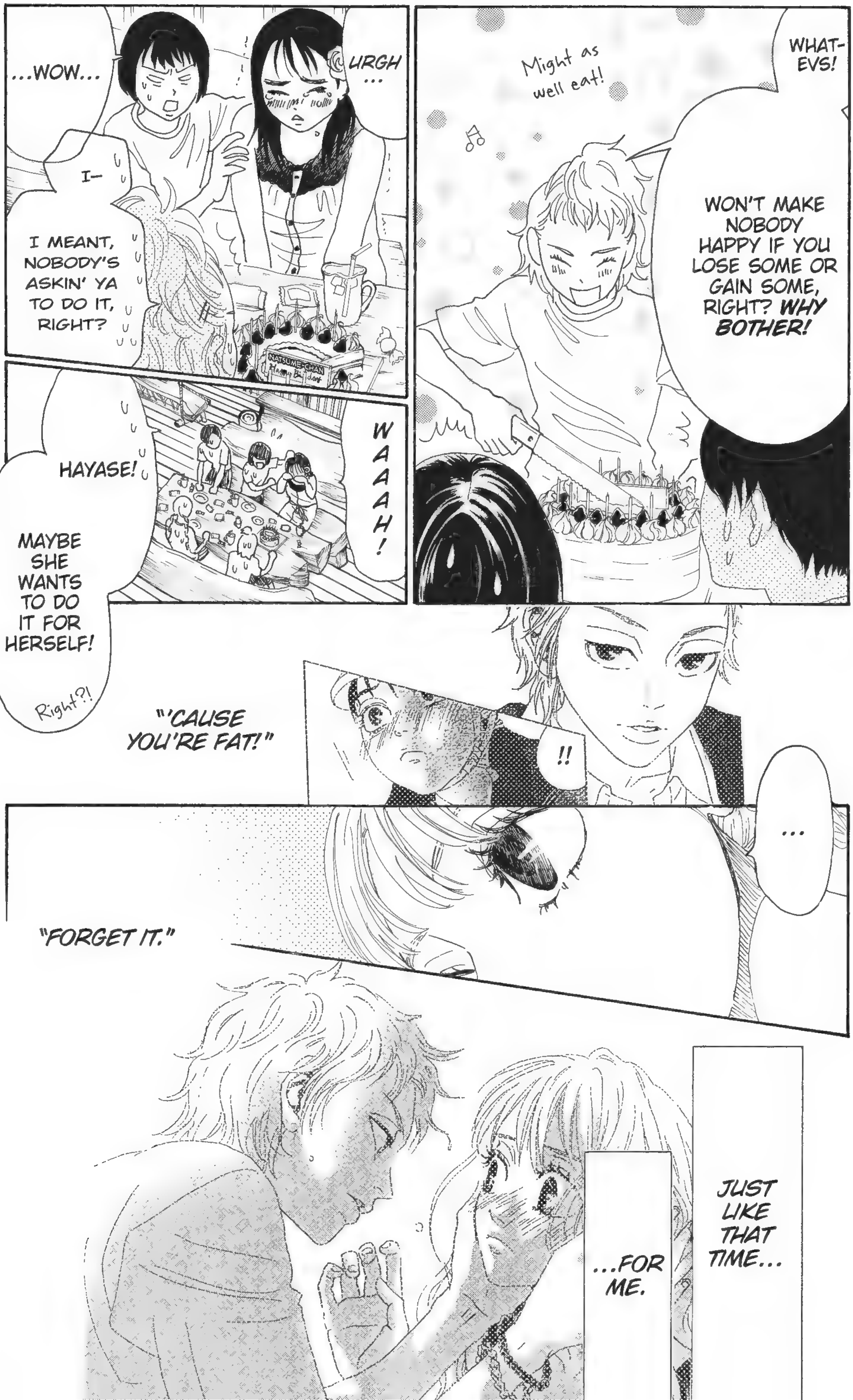
11

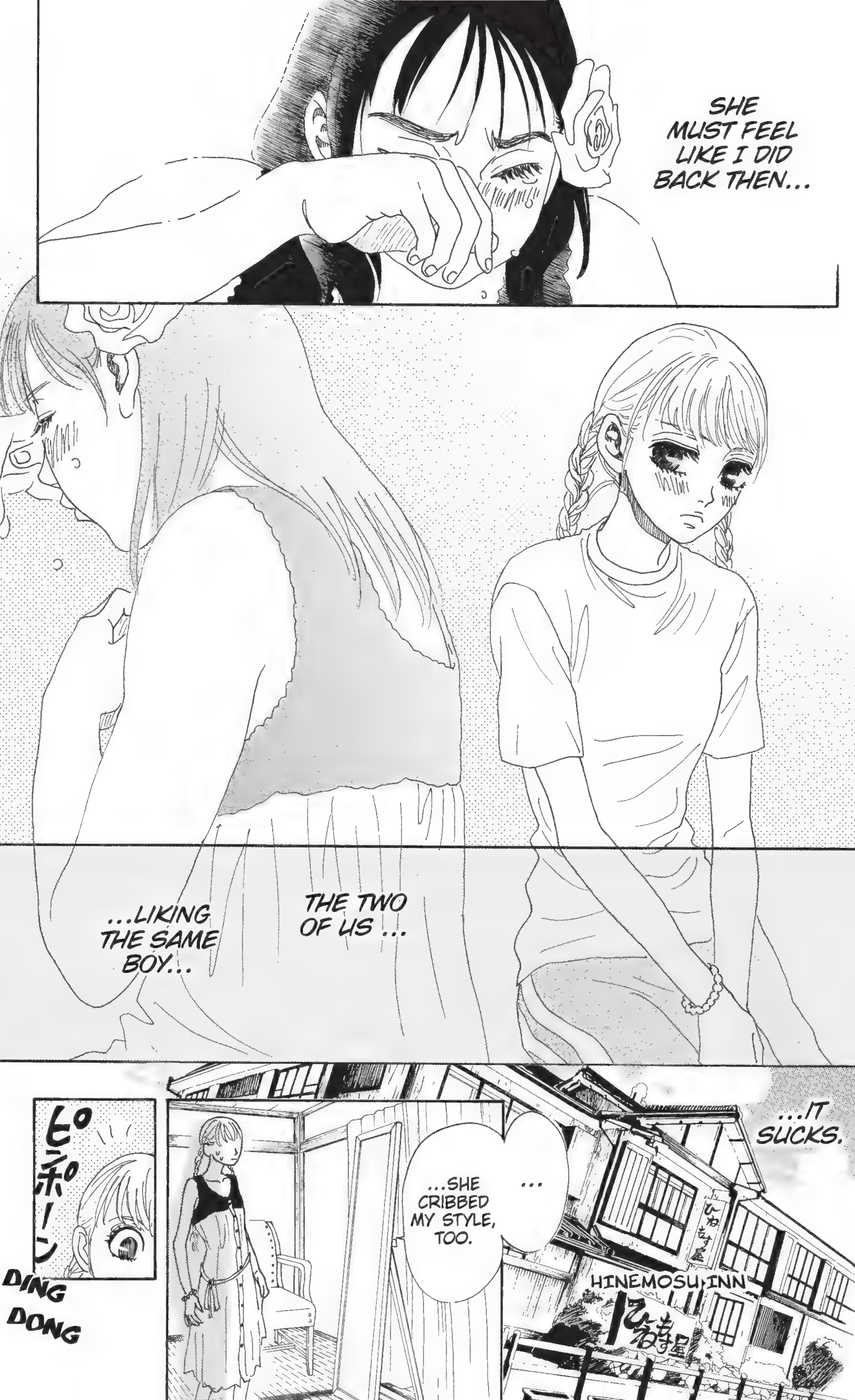
Ring of Fate

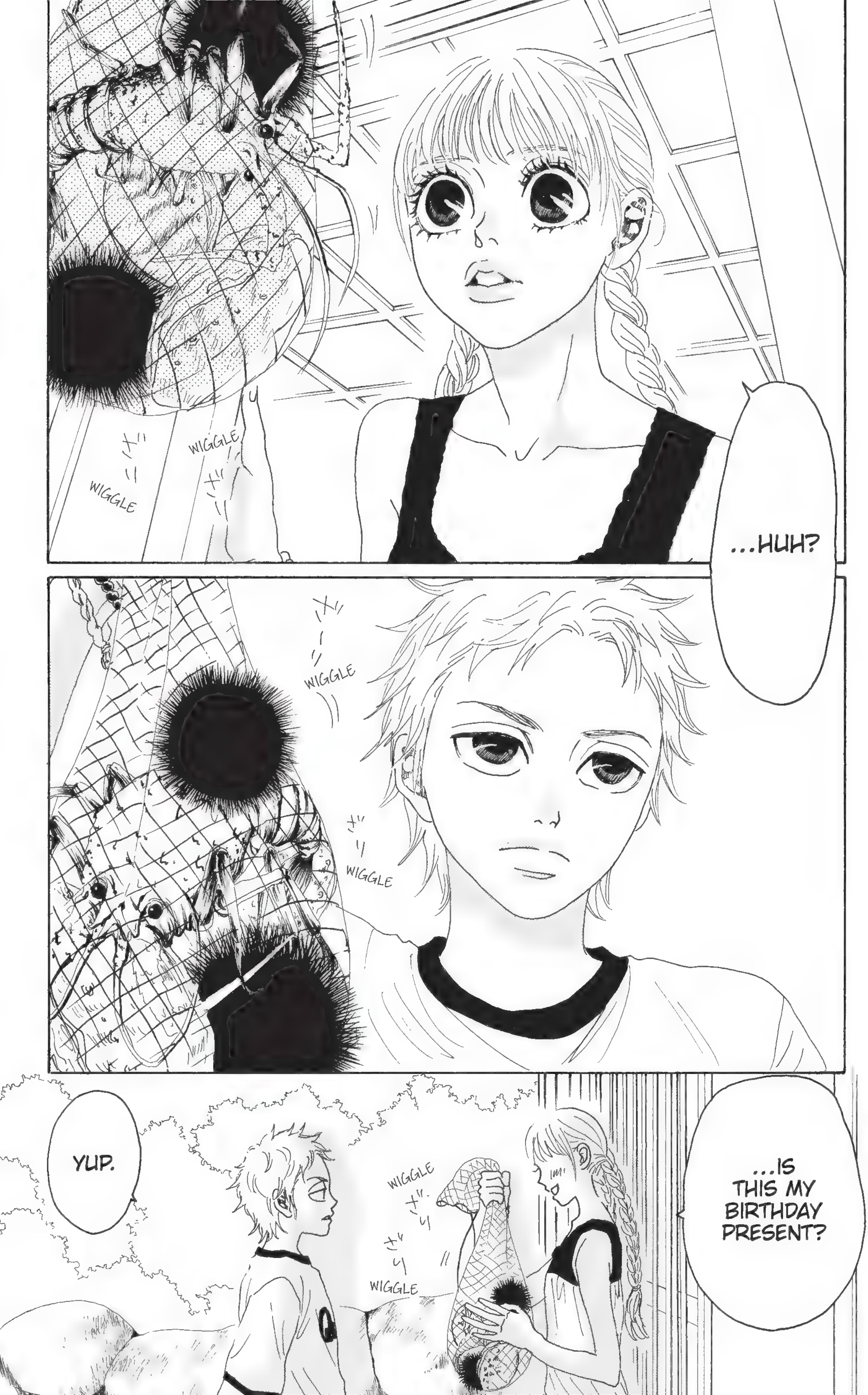

山の喫茶店 こけ
THE MOUNTAIN BERRY CAFÉ
THE MOUNTAIN BERRY CAFÉ
山の喫茶店
こけもも
階段上がってね
Come on up
THEY'RE HERE, THEY'RE HERE!
OKAY, ON THREE...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, NATSUME-CHAN!
POP!
POP!

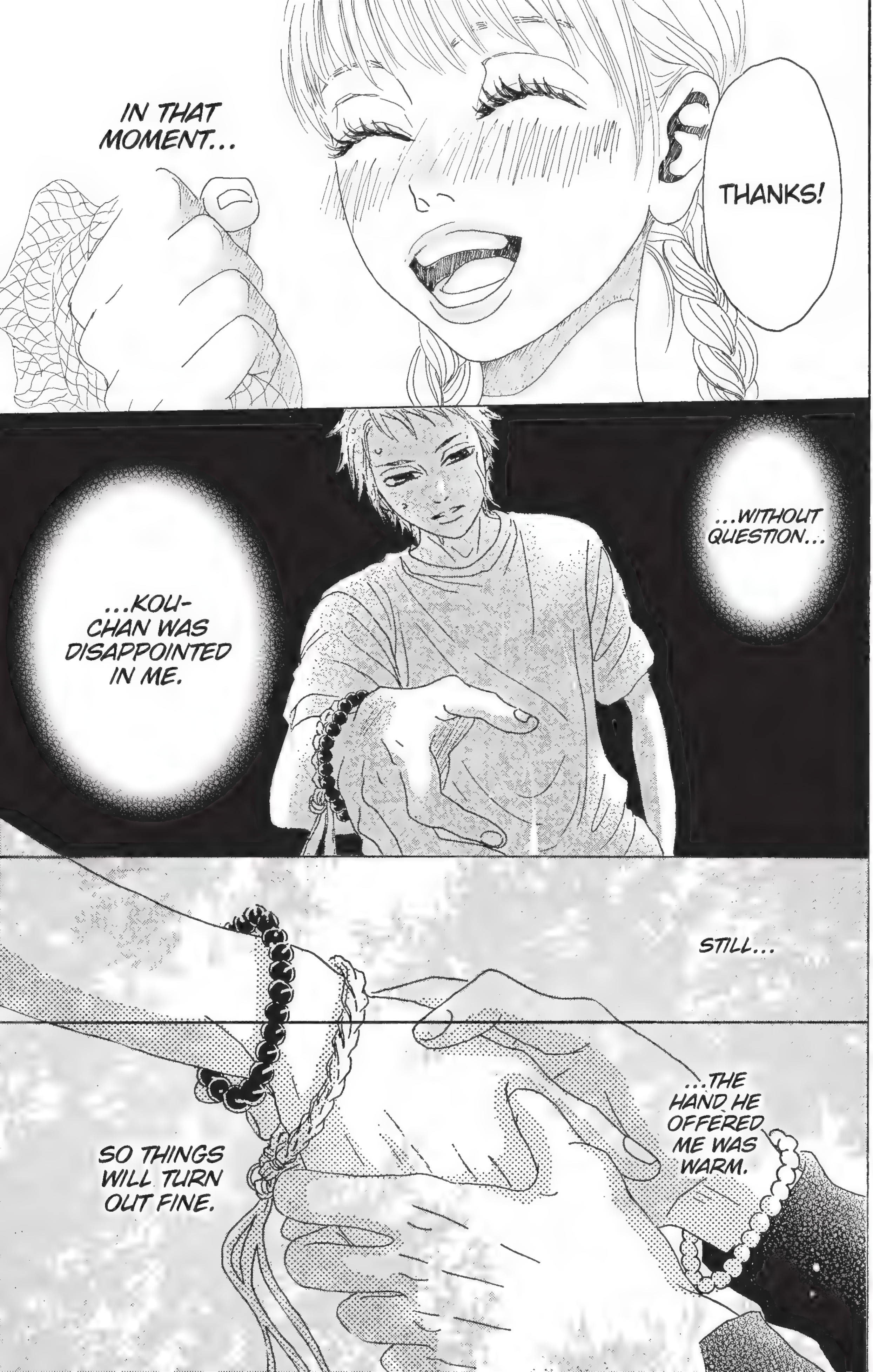

WHOA! UNREAL!
THANKS, GUYS! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE!
C'MON, NATSUME-CHAN! NO NEED TO CRY ABOUT IT!
AH HA HA HA HA HA HA
あははほは
THANK YOU VERY MUCH, KANA-CHAN'S MOM!
NO, THANK *YOU* FOR BEIN' SUCH A GOOD FRIEND TO KANA.
AT HOME YOU'RE ALL SHE TALKS ABOUT!
HEY, ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME WE STARTED ON THE CAKE?
OH,
BUT KOU-CHAN ISN'T HERE YET.
NATSUME-CHAN
なつめちゃん
Happy Birthday
HUH?
DID YOU INVITE HIM?
OF COURSE WE DID! AIN'T HE YOUR *BOYFRIEND?*
YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE!
Let's eat!
OH!

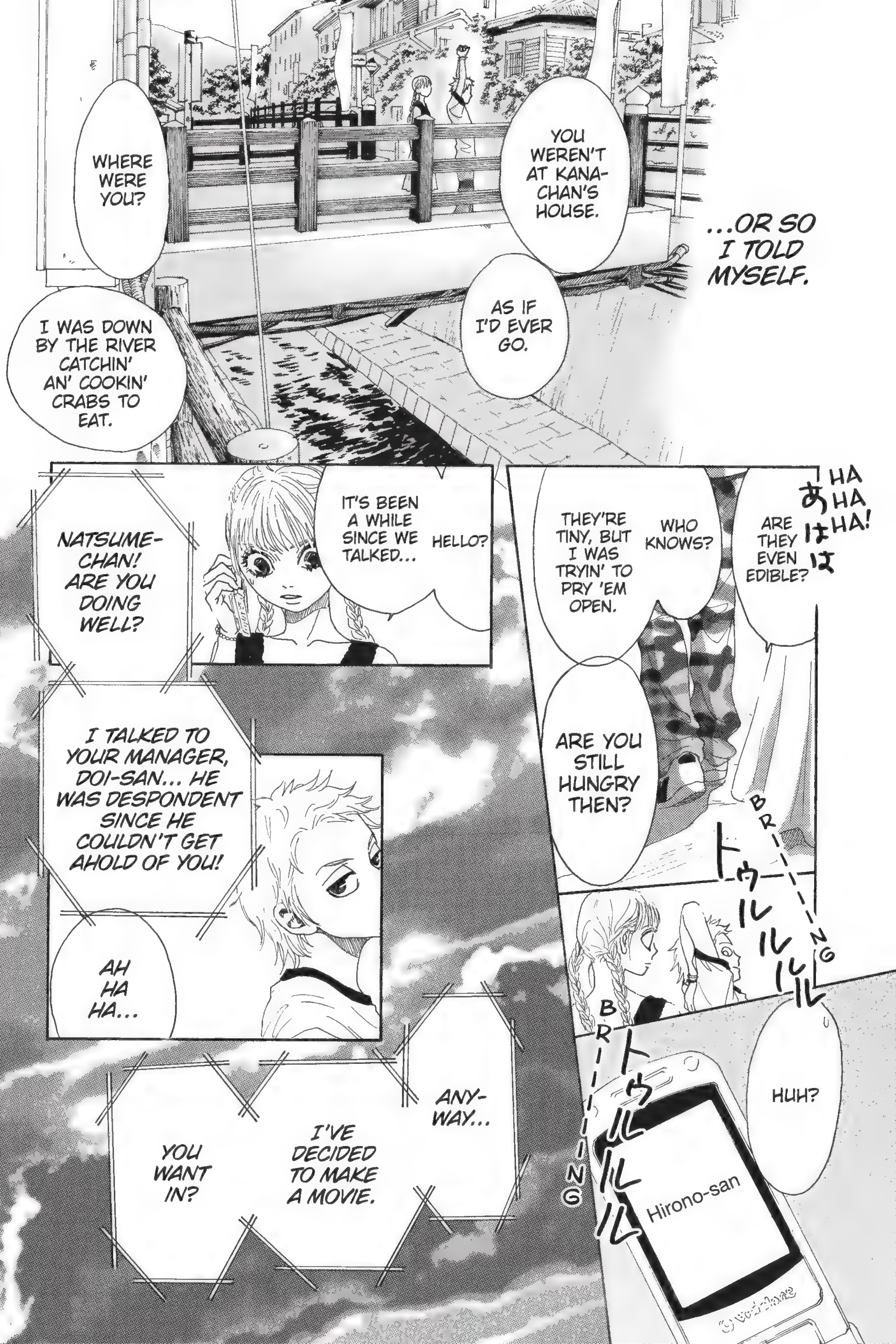

YOU DON'T NEED TO CUT ME A PIECE.
WHY'RE YOU THE ONE DRESSED UP?!
ゲラゲラ
WA HA HA HA!
WELL...
...THAT ASIDE...
...THOSE CLOTHES...
THEY SELL THAT OUTFIT AT "SAY YOU," RIGHT?
I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT LOOKED GOOD.
THEY'RE A POPULAR BRAND. EVERYONE'S WEARING IT.
WHY NO CAKE? ARE YOU ON A DIET NOW?!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT... HAVE YOU LOST WEIGHT RECENTLY?
IT'S NOT...
IT'S NOT THAT I'M ON A DIET OR ANYTHIN'...
...OH.

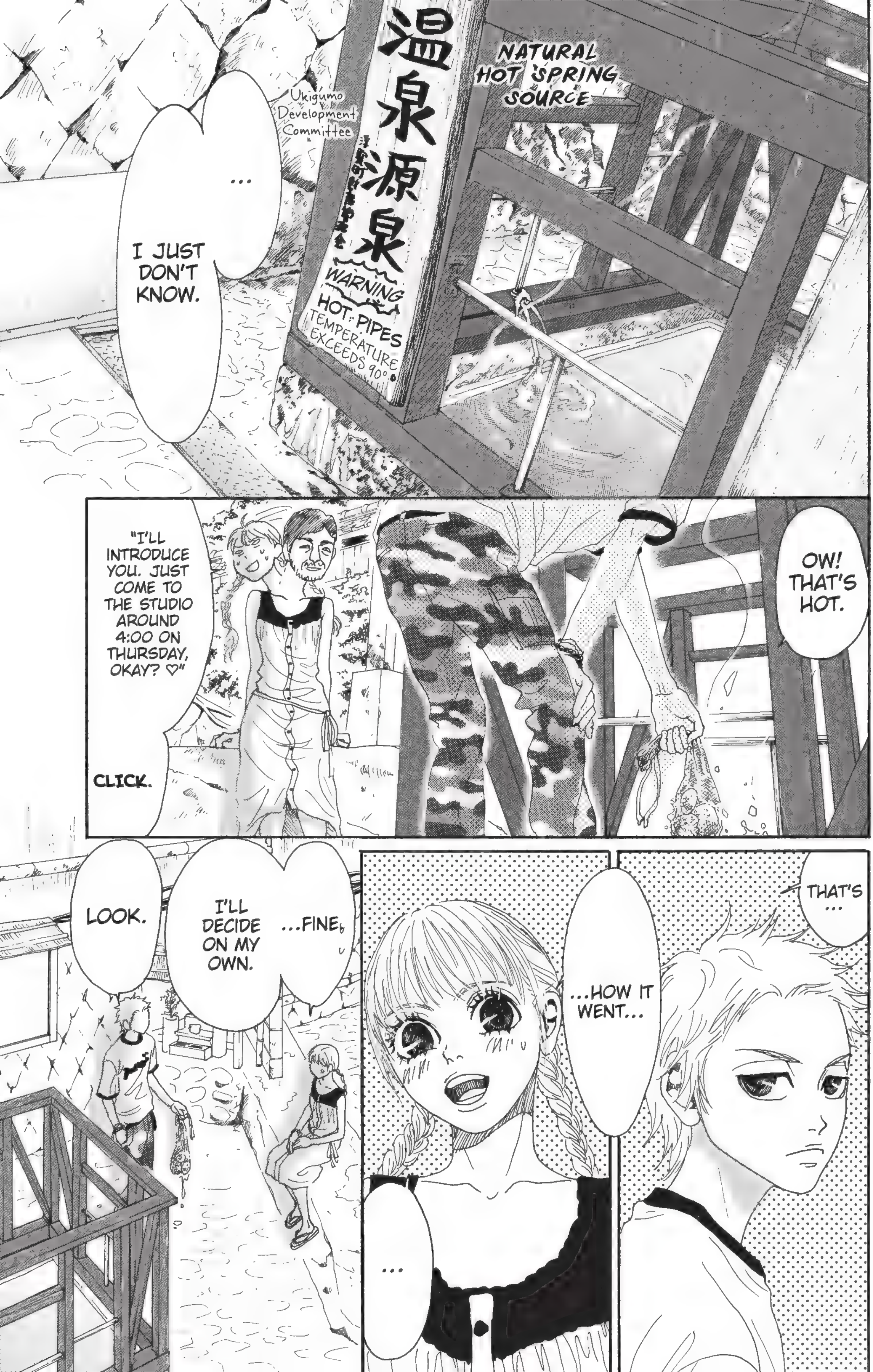

WHAT-EVS!
Might as well eat!
WON'T MAKE NOBODY HAPPY IF YOU LOSE SOME OR GAIN SOME, RIGHT? *WHY BOTHER!*
URGH…
…WOW…
I—
I MEANT, NOBODY'S ASKIN' YA TO DO IT, RIGHT?
NATSUME-CHAN Happy Birthday
WAAAAH!
HAYASE!
MAYBE SHE WANTS TO DO IT FOR HERSELF!
Right?!
"'CAUSE YOU'RE FAT!"
!!
…
"FORGET IT."
JUST LIKE THAT TIME…
…FOR ME.

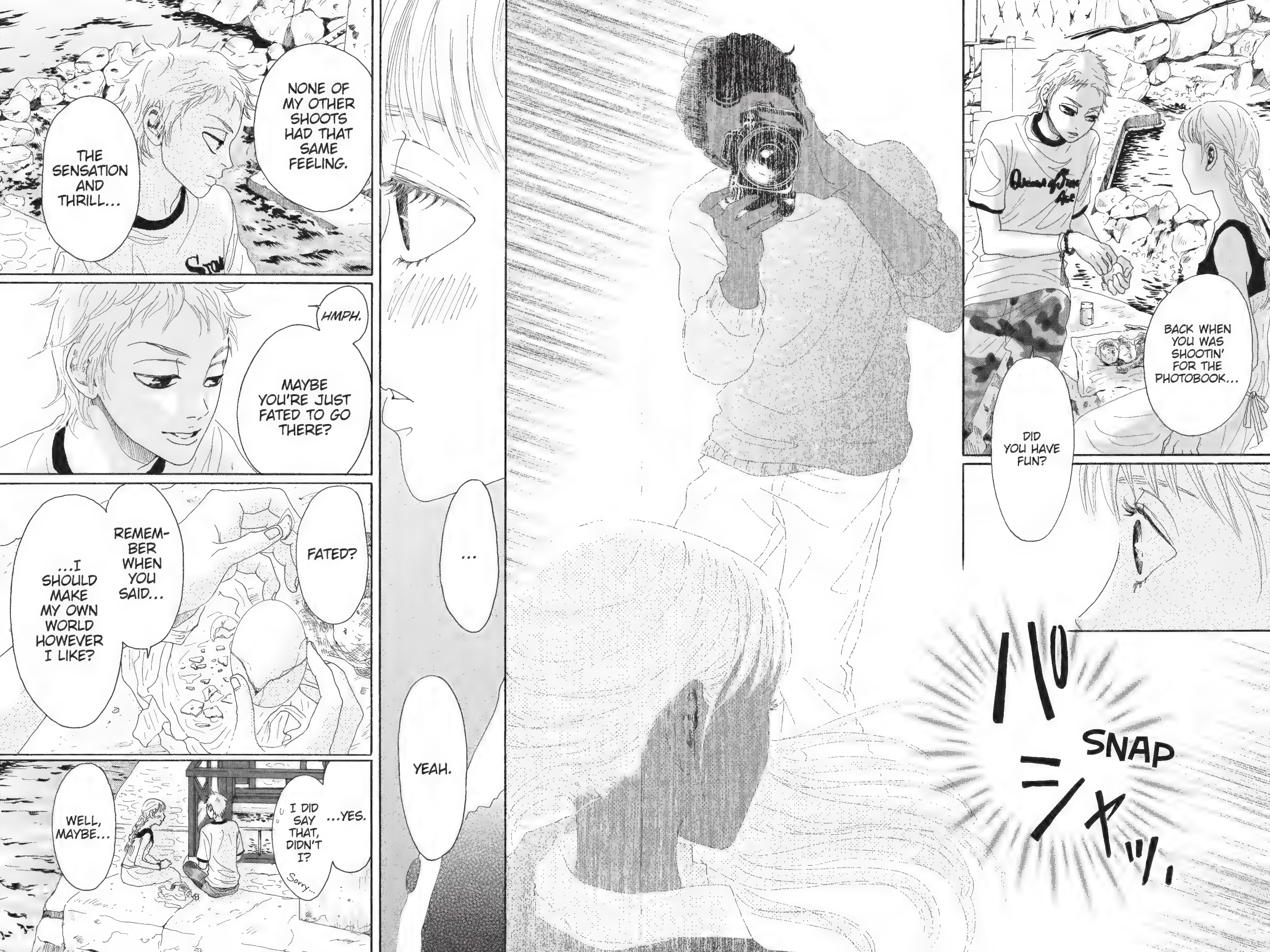

SHE MUST FEEL LIKE I DID BACK THEN...
THE TWO OF US ...
...LIKING THE SAME BOY...
...IT SUCKS.
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN
ひねもす屋
...
...SHE CRIBBED MY STYLE, TOO.
ピンポーン
DING DONG

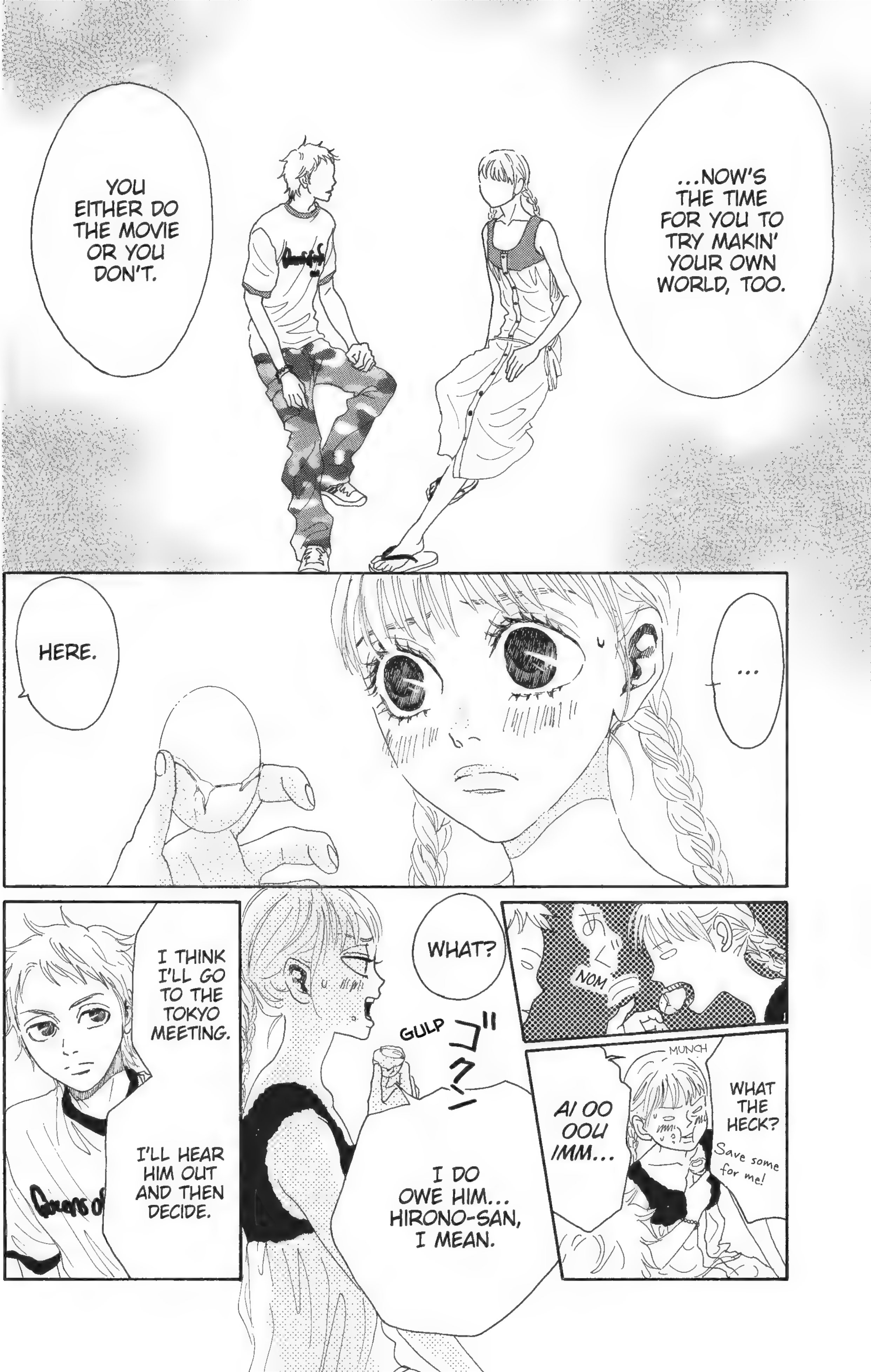

...HUH?
ザリ
WIGGLE
ザリ
WIGGLE
ザリ
WIGGLE
ザリ
WIGGLE
...IS THIS MY BIRTHDAY PRESENT?
YUP.
WIGGLE
ザリ
ザリ
WIGGLE

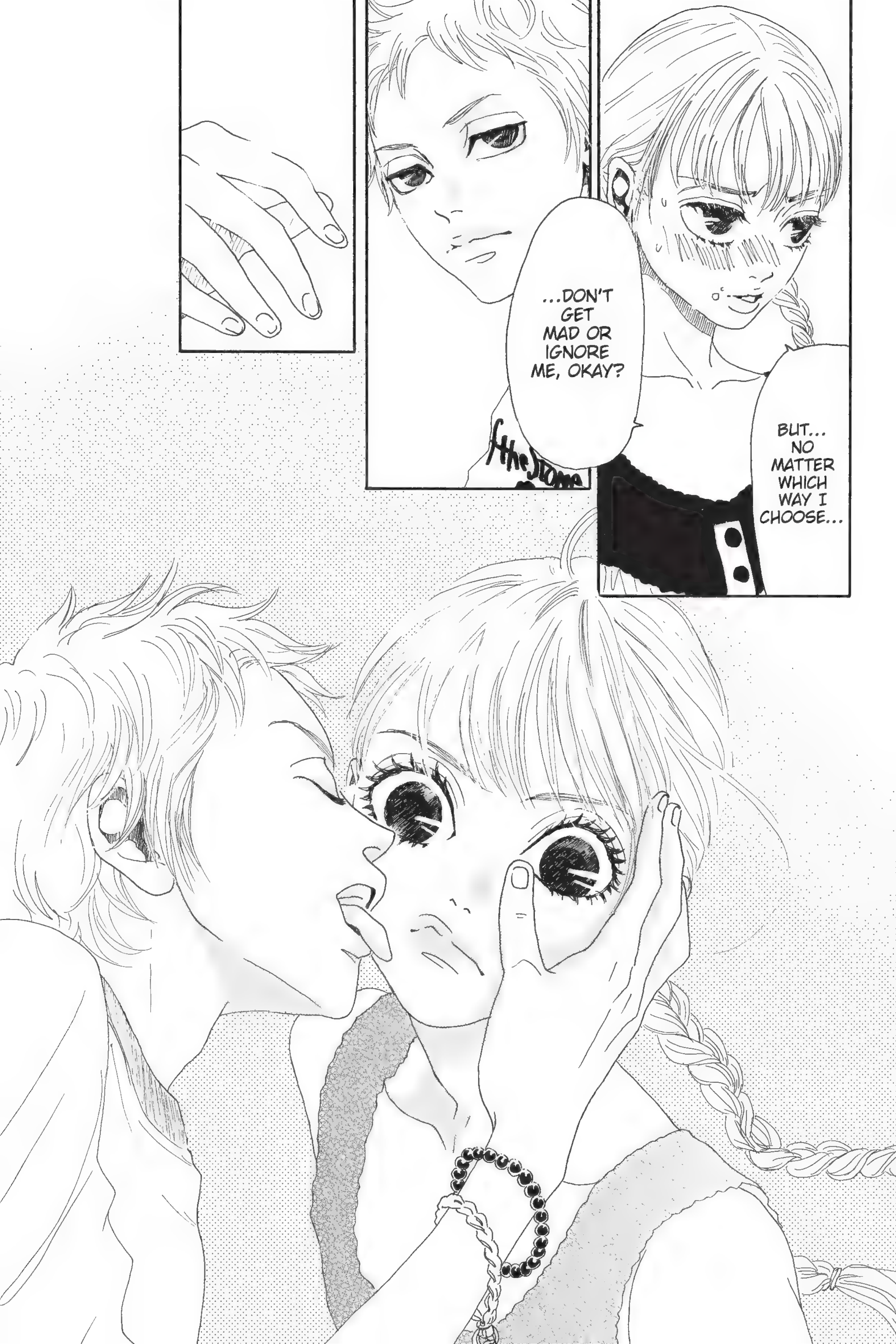

THANKS!
IN THAT MOMENT...
...WITHOUT QUESTION...
...KOU-CHAN WAS DISAPPOINTED IN ME.
STILL...
...THE HAND HE OFFERED ME WAS WARM.
SO THINGS WILL TURN OUT FINE.

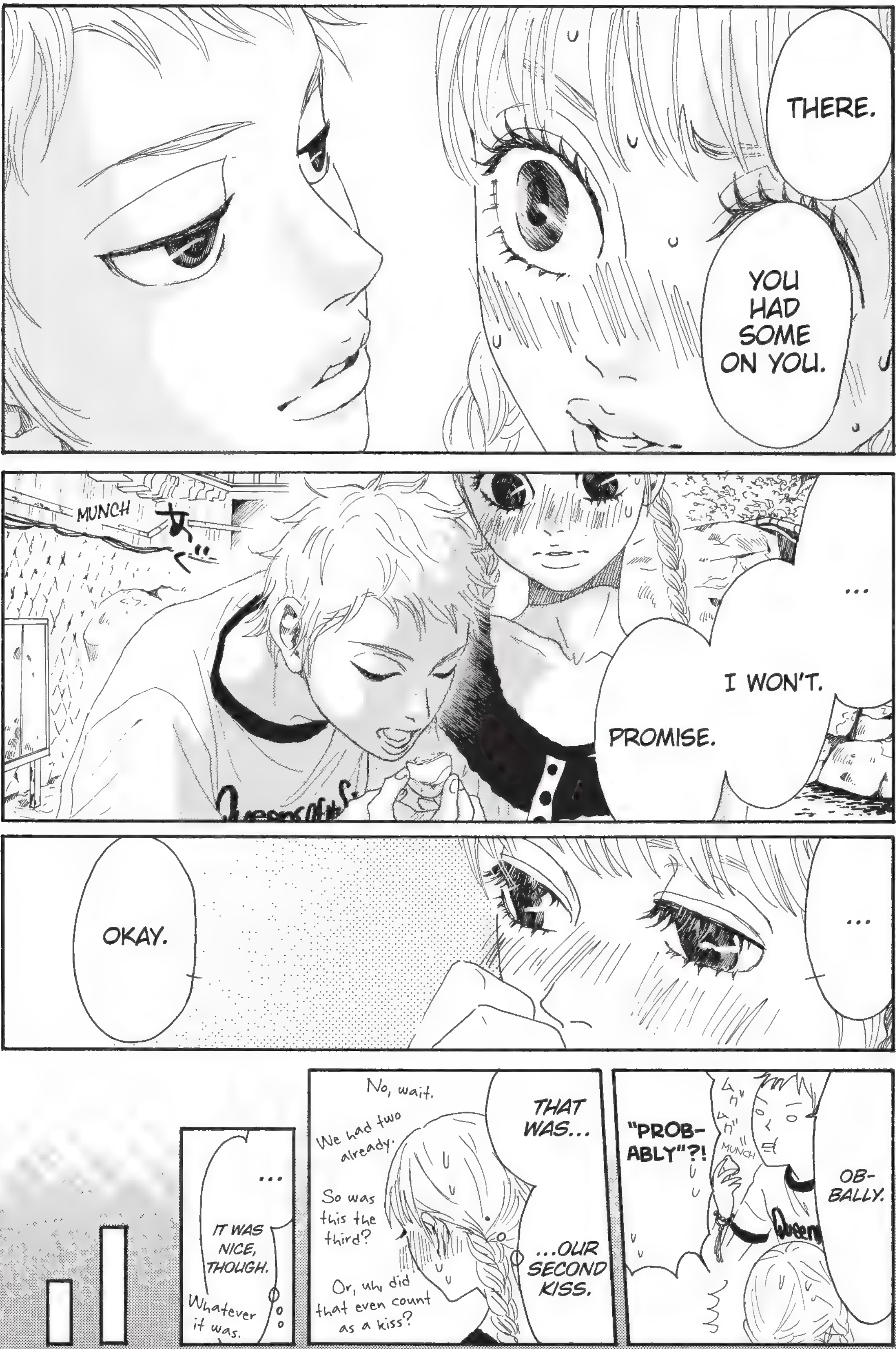

...OR SO I TOLD MYSELF.
YOU WEREN'T AT KANA-CHAN'S HOUSE.
WHERE WERE YOU?
AS IF I'D EVER GO.
I WAS DOWN BY THE RIVER CATCHIN' AN' COOKIN' CRABS TO EAT.
ARE THEY EVEN EDIBLE?
あはは HA HA HA!
WHO KNOWS?
THEY'RE TINY, BUT I WAS TRYIN' TO PRY 'EM OPEN.
ARE YOU STILL HUNGRY THEN?
トゥルルル BRRING
HUH?
トゥルルル BRRING
Hirono-san
HELLO?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE TALKED...
NATSUME-CHAN! ARE YOU DOING WELL?
I TALKED TO YOUR MANAGER, DOI-SAN... HE WAS DESPONDENT SINCE HE COULDN'T GET AHOLD OF YOU!
AH HA HA...
ANY-WAY...
I'VE DECIDED TO MAKE A MOVIE.
YOU WANT IN?

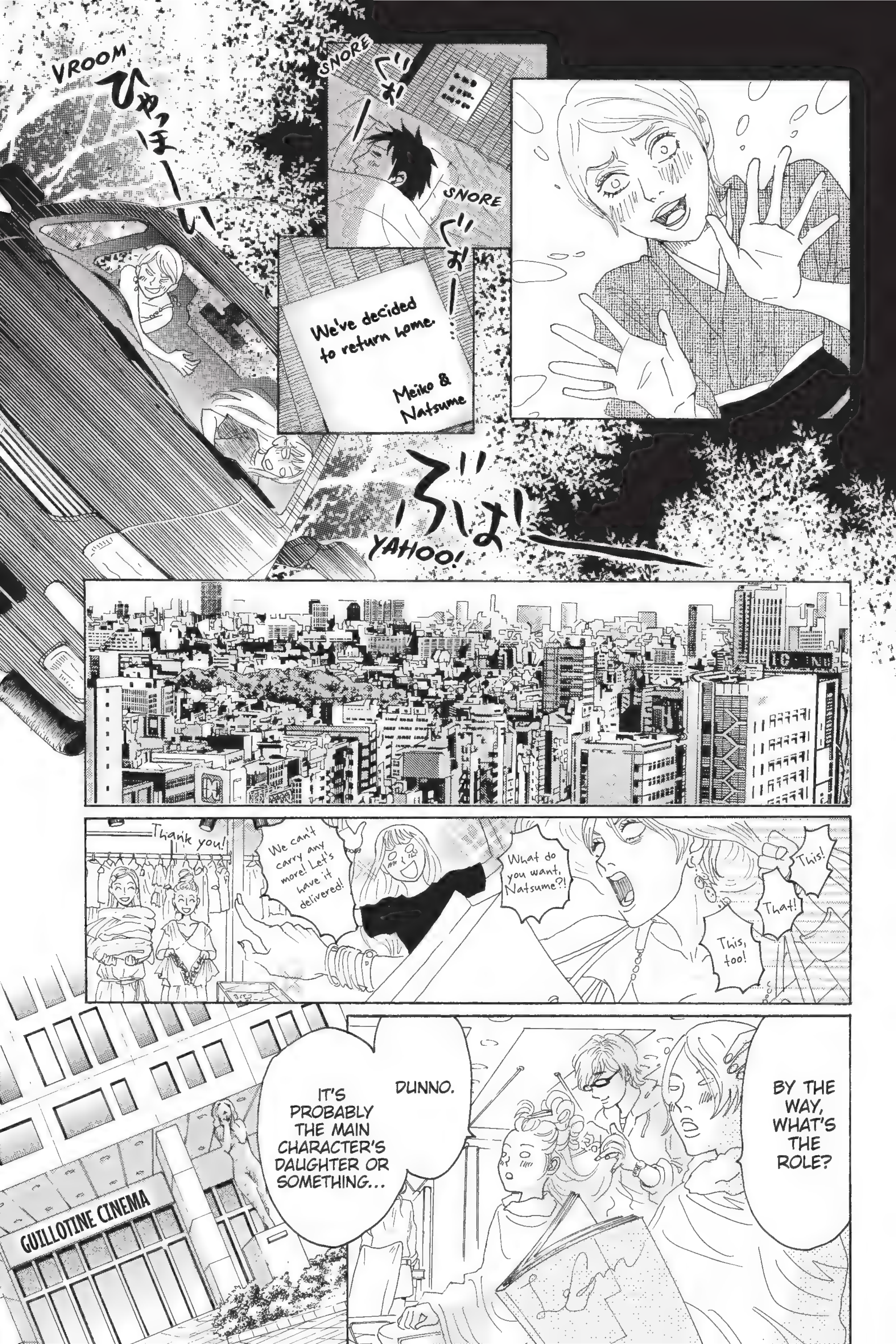

温泉源泉
NATURAL HOT SPRING SOURCE
Ukigumo Development Committee
WARNING HOT: PIPES TEMPERATURE EXCEEDS 90°
... I JUST DON'T KNOW.
OW! THAT'S HOT.
"I'LL INTRODUCE YOU. JUST COME TO THE STUDIO AROUND 4:00 ON THURSDAY, OKAY? ♡"
CLICK.
THAT'S ...
...HOW IT WENT...
...
...FINE,
I'LL DECIDE ON MY OWN.
LOOK.

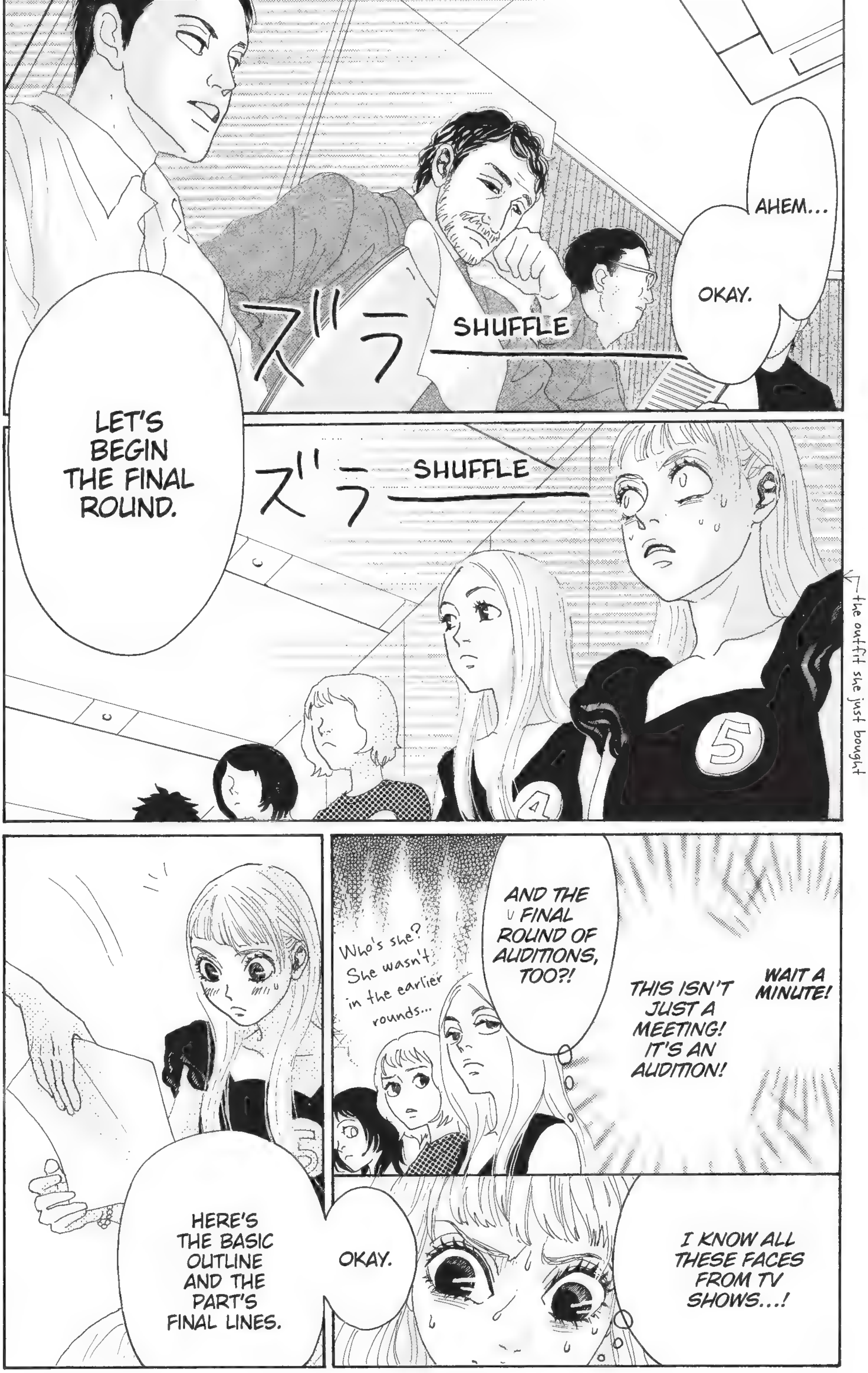

BACK WHEN YOU WAS SHOOTIN' FOR THE PHOTOBOOK...
DID YOU HAVE FUN?
パシャッ
SNAP
...
YEAH.
NONE OF MY OTHER SHOOTS HAD THAT SAME FEELING.
THE SENSATION AND THRILL...
HMPH.
MAYBE YOU'RE JUST FATED TO GO THERE?
FATED?
REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAID...
...I SHOULD MAKE MY OWN WORLD HOWEVER I LIKE?
...YES.
I DID SAY THAT, DIDN'T I?
Sorry...
WELL, MAYBE...

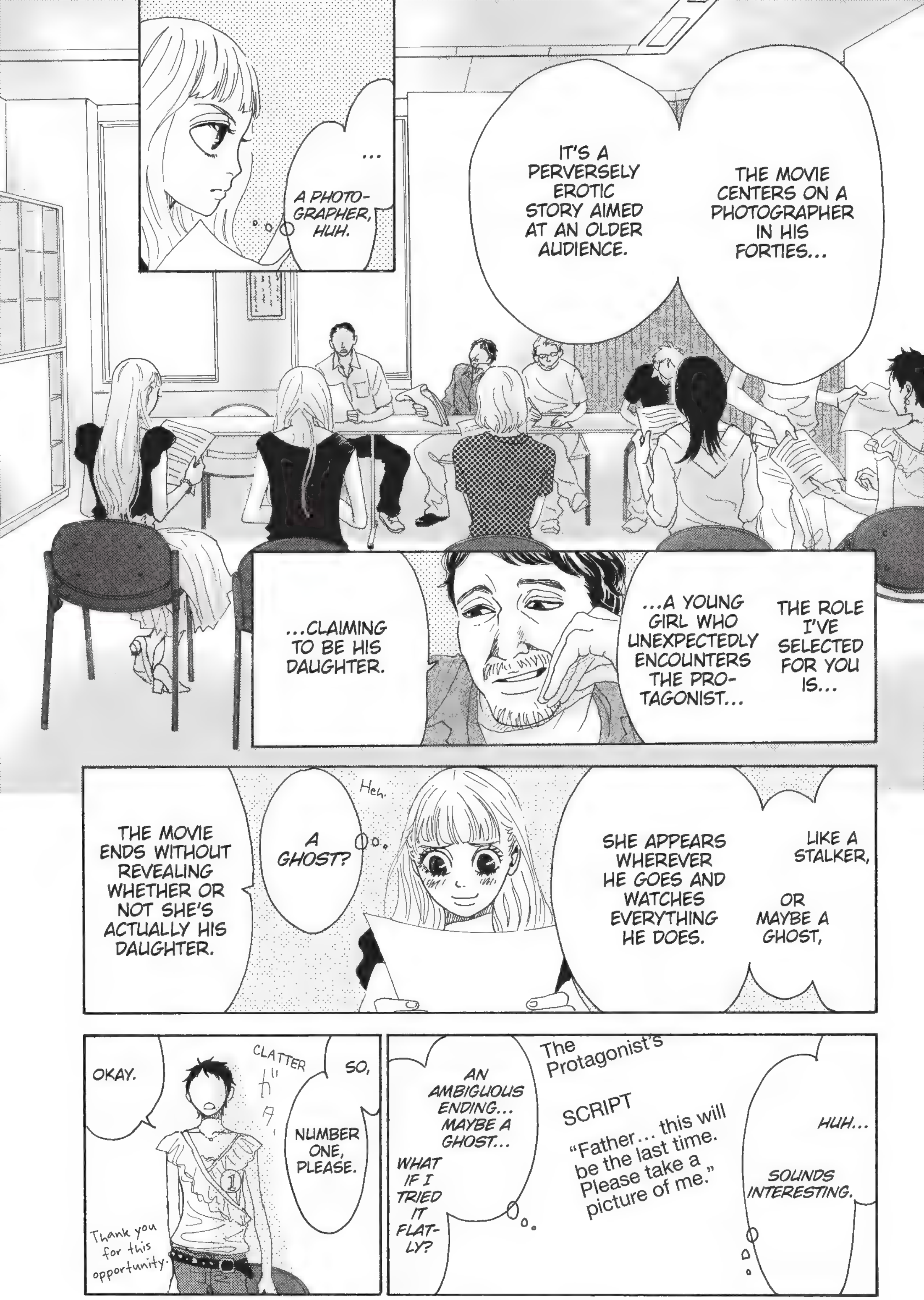

...NOW'S THE TIME FOR YOU TO TRY MAKIN' YOUR OWN WORLD, TOO.
YOU EITHER DO THE MOVIE OR YOU DON'T.
...
HERE.
あぐ
NOM
WHAT?
MUNCH
WHAT THE HECK?
Save some for me!
AI OO OOU IMM...
GULP
ゴクン
I DO OWE HIM... HIRONO-SAN, I MEAN.
I THINK I'LL GO TO THE TOKYO MEETING.
I'LL HEAR HIM OUT AND THEN DECIDE.

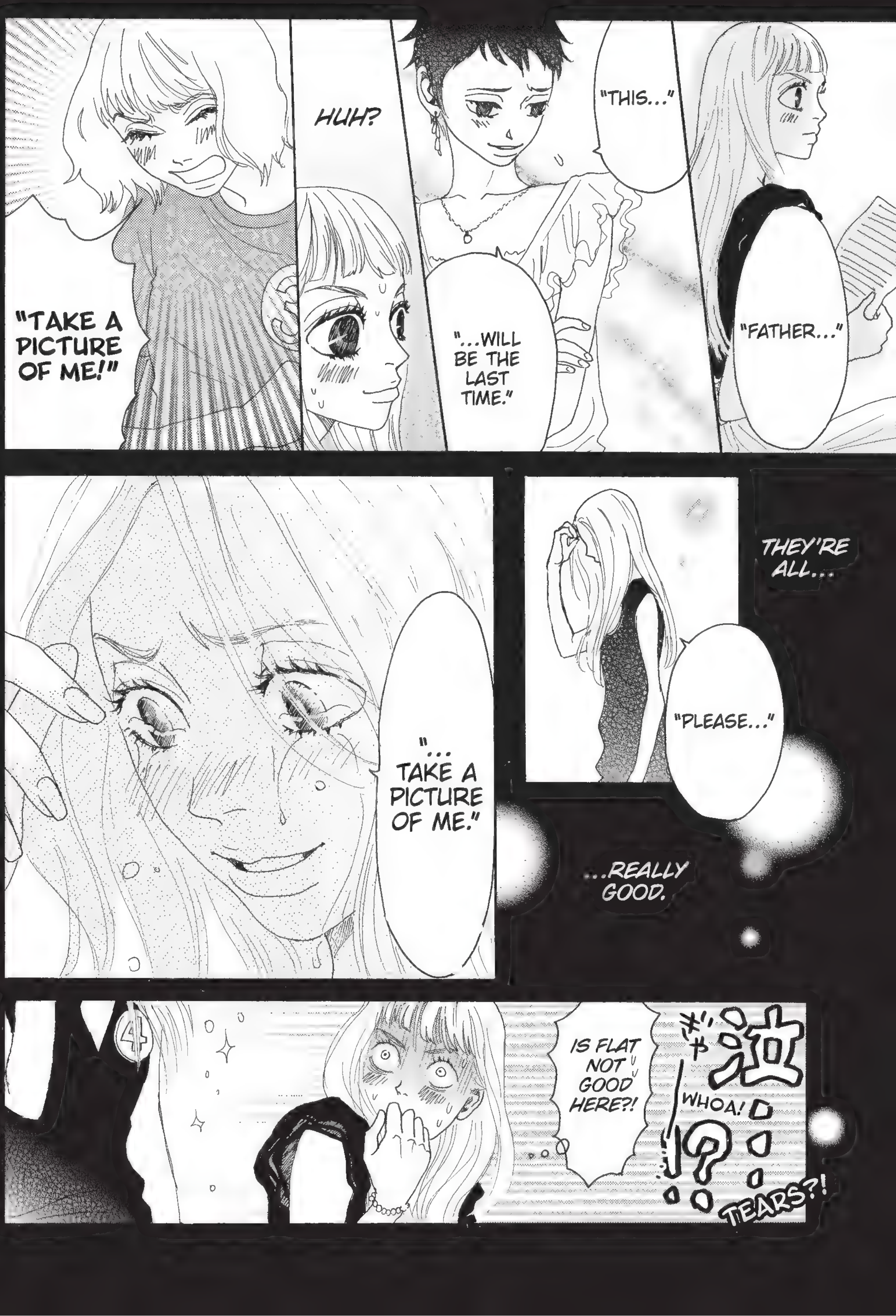

BUT... NO MATTER WHICH WAY I CHOOSE...
...DON'T GET MAD OR IGNORE ME, OKAY?

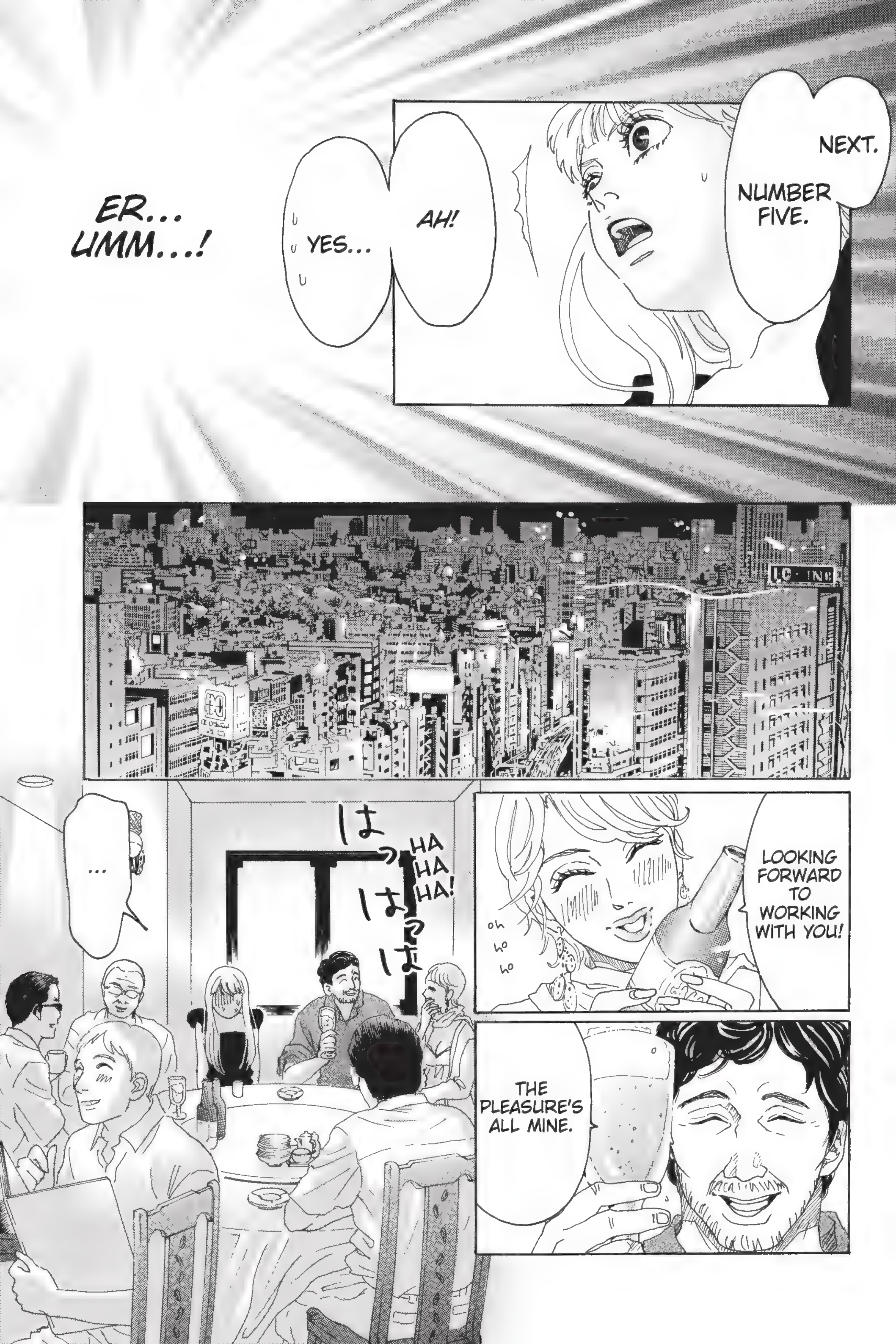

THERE.
YOU HAD SOME ON YOU.
...
I WON'T.
PROMISE.
MUNCH
...
OKAY.
OB-BALLY.
"PROB-ABLY"?!
MUNCH
THAT WAS...
...OUR SECOND KISS.
No, wait.
We had two already.
So was this the third?
Or, uh, did that even count as a kiss?
...
IT WAS NICE, THOUGH.
Whatever it was.

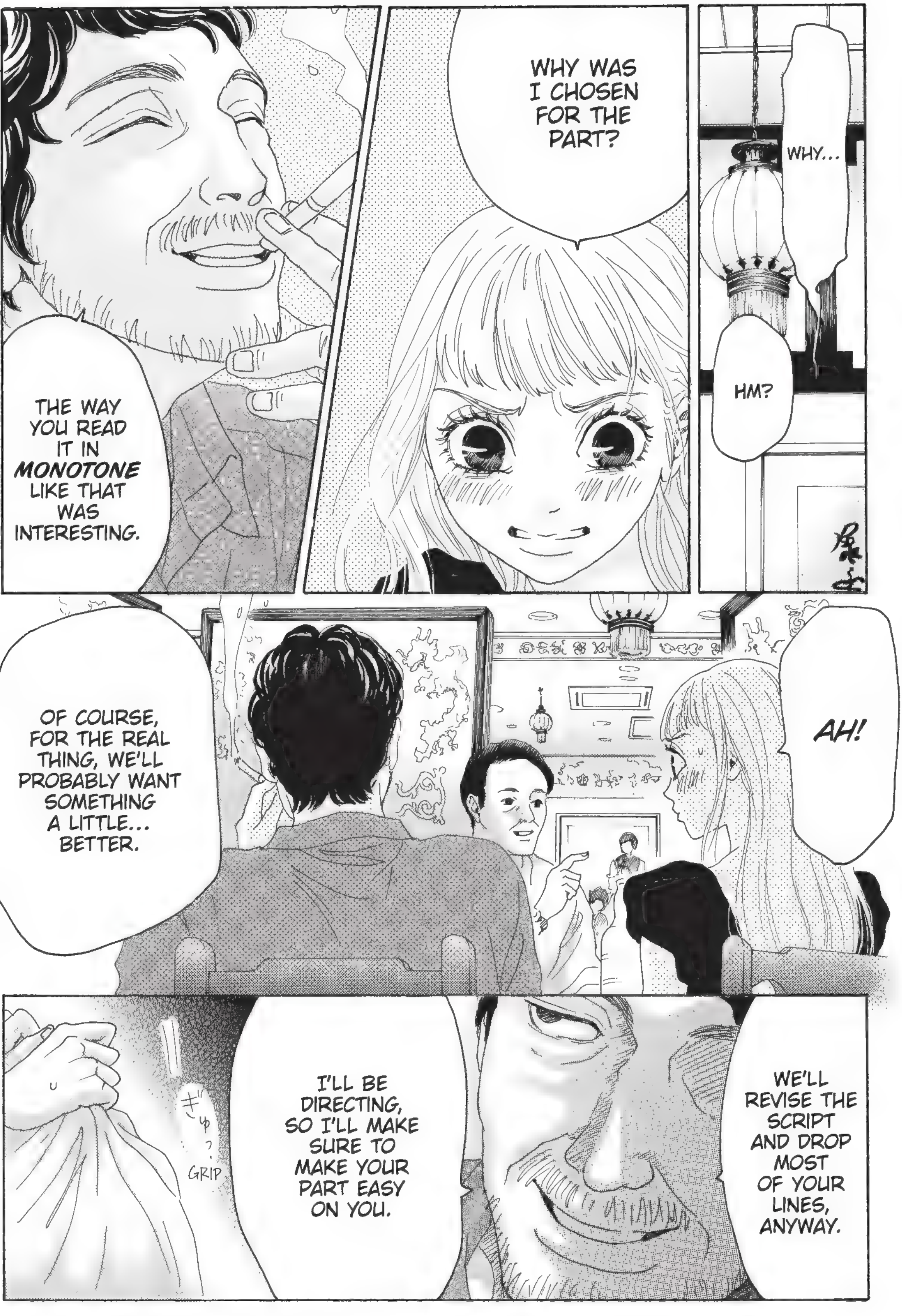

ぶはー
YAHOO!
SNORE
ぐぉー
SNORE
ぐぉー
We've decided to return home.
Meiko & Natsume
VROOM
ひゃっほーい
This!
That!
This, too!
What do you want, Natsume?!
We can't carry any more! Let's have it delivered!
Thank you!
BY THE WAY, WHAT'S THE ROLE?
DUNNO.
IT'S PROBABLY THE MAIN CHARACTER'S DAUGHTER OR SOMETHING...
GUILLOTINE CINEMA

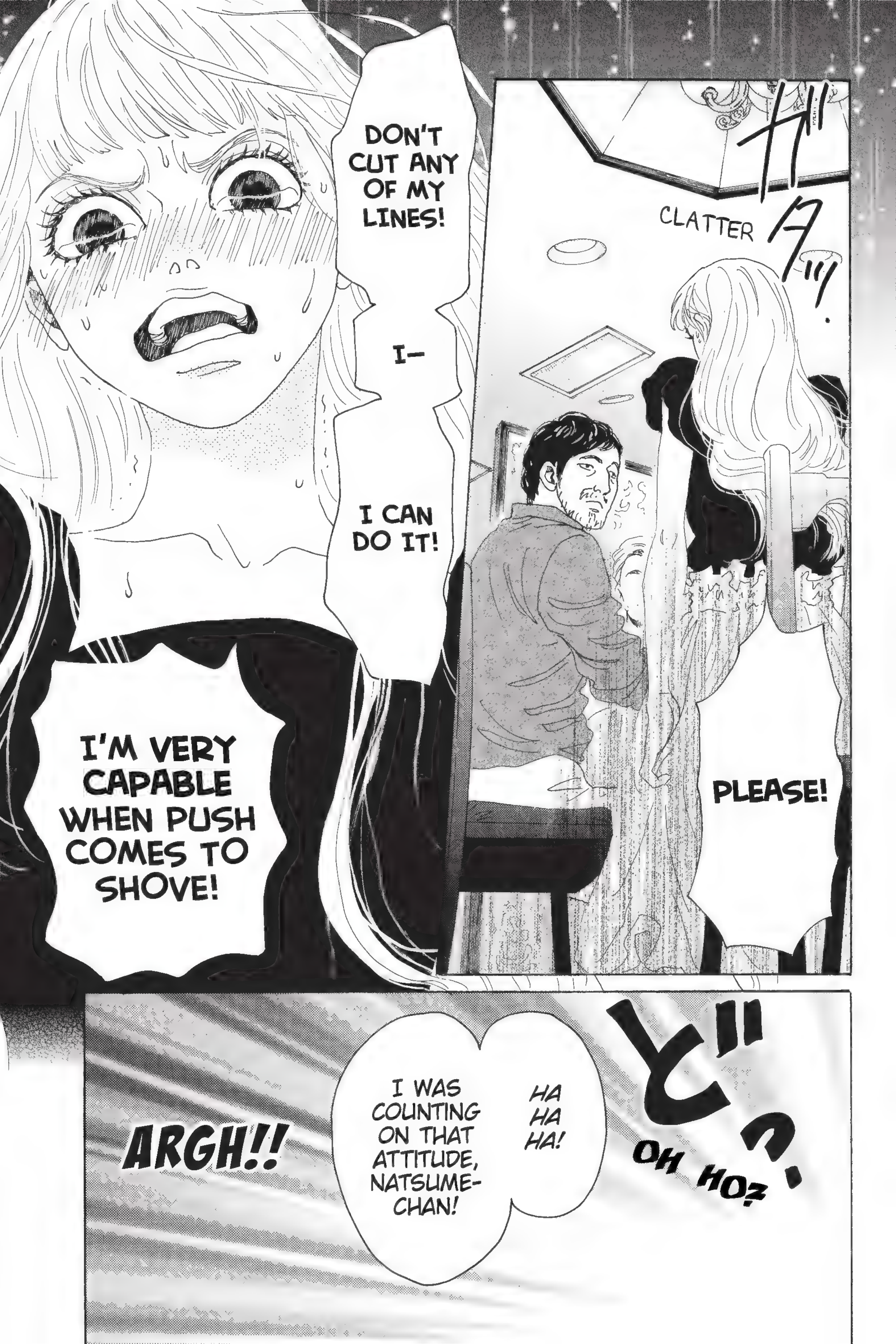

AHEM...
OKAY.
ズラー
SHUFFLE
LET'S BEGIN THE FINAL ROUND.
ズラー
SHUFFLE
the outfit she just bought
WAIT A MINUTE!
THIS ISN'T JUST A MEETING! IT'S AN AUDITION!
AND THE FINAL ROUND OF AUDITIONS, TOO?!
Who's she? She wasn't in the earlier rounds...
I KNOW ALL THESE FACES FROM TV SHOWS...!
OKAY.
HERE'S THE BASIC OUTLINE AND THE PART'S FINAL LINES.

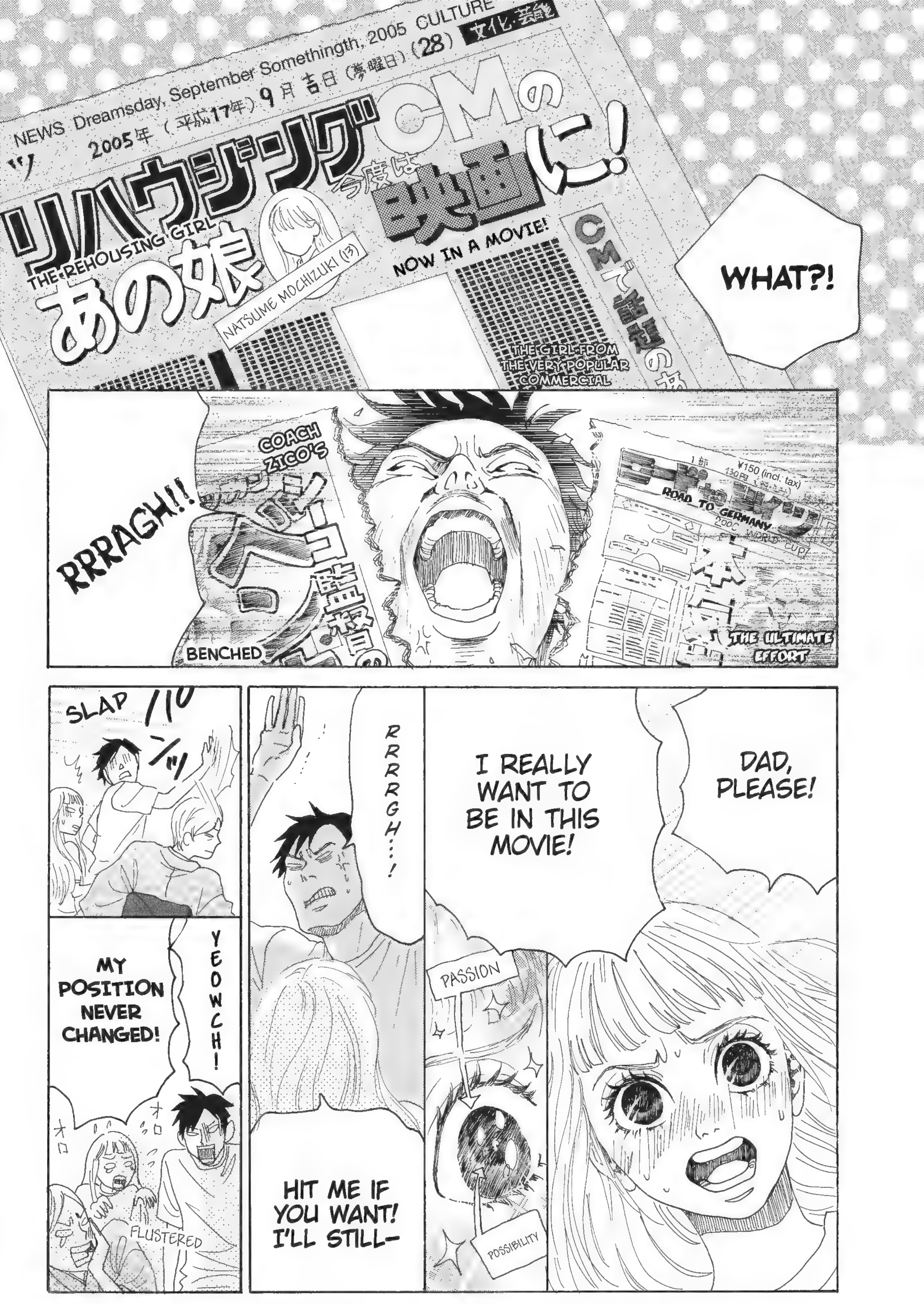

THE MOVIE CENTERS ON A PHOTOGRAPHER IN HIS FORTIES...
IT'S A PERVERSELY EROTIC STORY AIMED AT AN OLDER AUDIENCE.
...
A PHOTOGRAPHER, HUH.
THE ROLE I'VE SELECTED FOR YOU IS...
...A YOUNG GIRL WHO UNEXPECTEDLY ENCOUNTERS THE PROTAGONIST...
...CLAIMING TO BE HIS DAUGHTER.
LIKE A STALKER,
OR MAYBE A GHOST,
SHE APPEARS WHEREVER HE GOES AND WATCHES EVERYTHING HE DOES.
Heh.
A GHOST?
THE MOVIE ENDS WITHOUT REVEALING WHETHER OR NOT SHE'S ACTUALLY HIS DAUGHTER.
HUH...
SOUNDS INTERESTING.
The Protagonist's
SCRIPT
“Father… this will be the last time. Please take a picture of me.”
AN AMBIGUOUS ENDING... MAYBE A GHOST...
WHAT IF I TRIED IT FLATLY?
SO,
NUMBER ONE, PLEASE.
CLATTER
ガタ
1
OKAY.
Thank you for this opportunity.

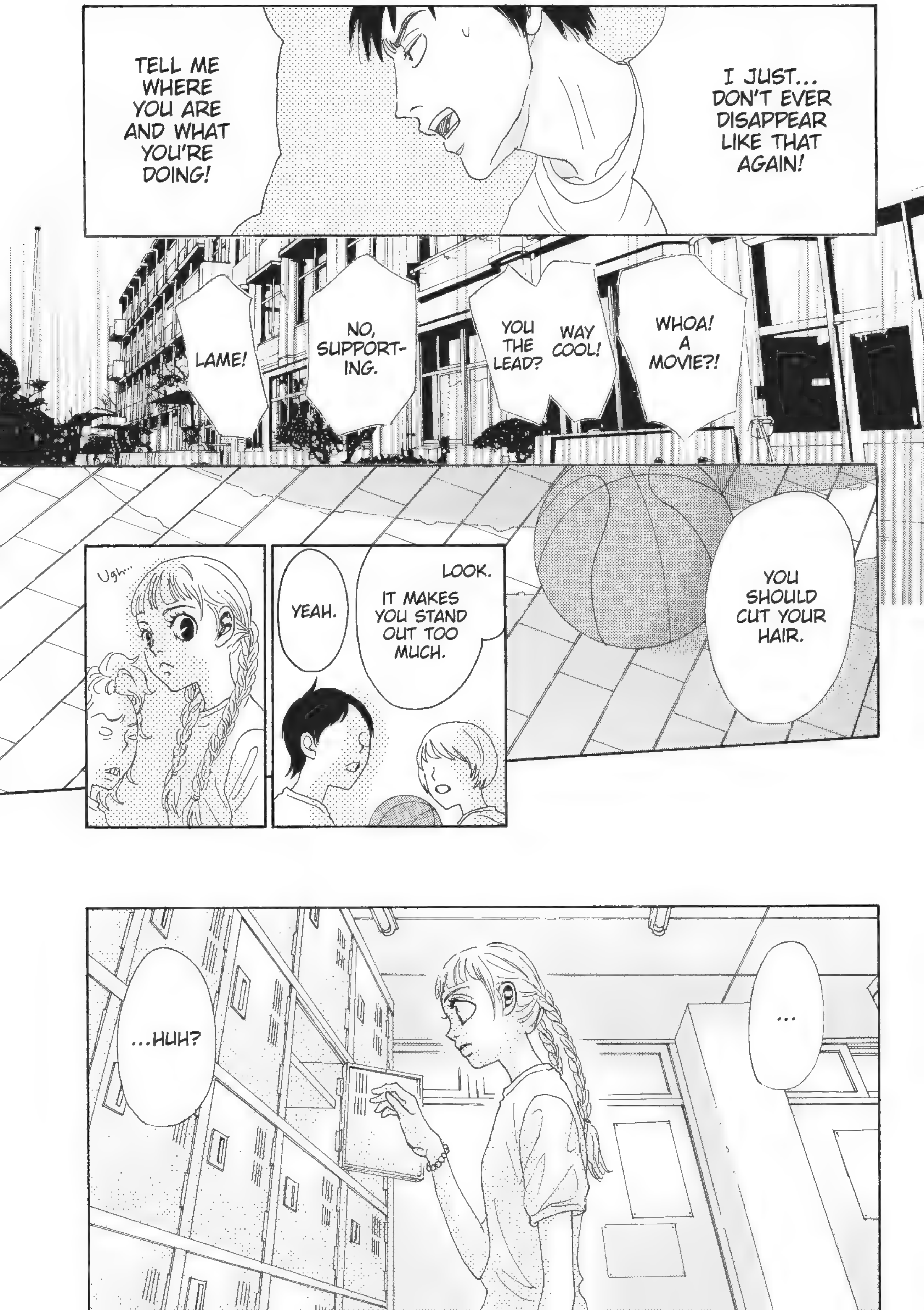

"FATHER..."
"THIS..."
"...WILL BE THE LAST TIME."
HUH?
"TAKE A PICTURE OF ME!"
THEY'RE ALL...
"PLEASE..."
...REALLY GOOD.
"...TAKE A PICTURE OF ME."
ギャ
泣
WHOA!
!?
TEARS?!
IS FLAT NOT GOOD HERE?!
4

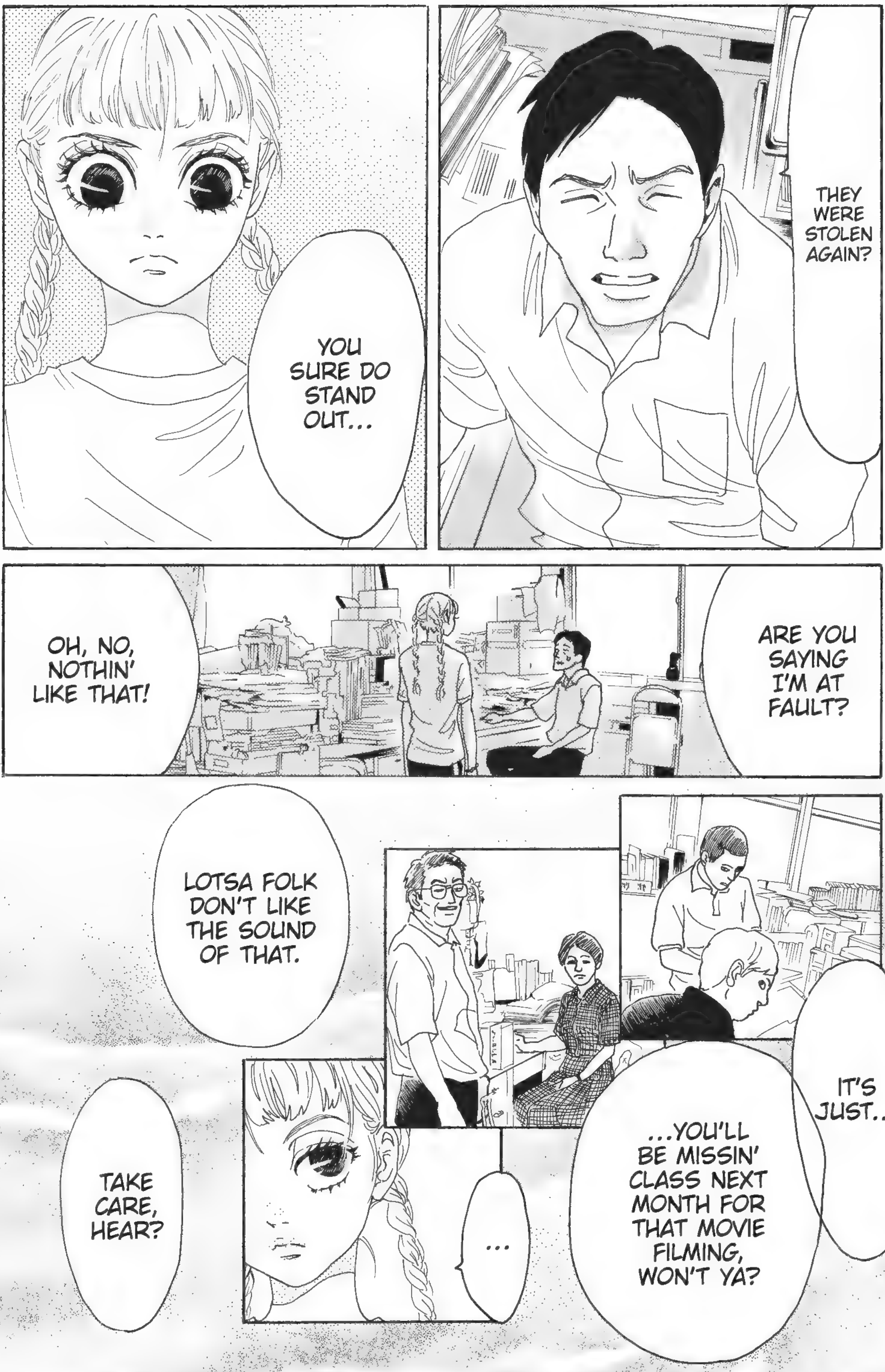

NEXT.
NUMBER FIVE.
AH!
YES...
ER... UMM...!
LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU!
oh ho ho
THE PLEASURE'S ALL MINE.
はっはっは
HA HA HA!
...

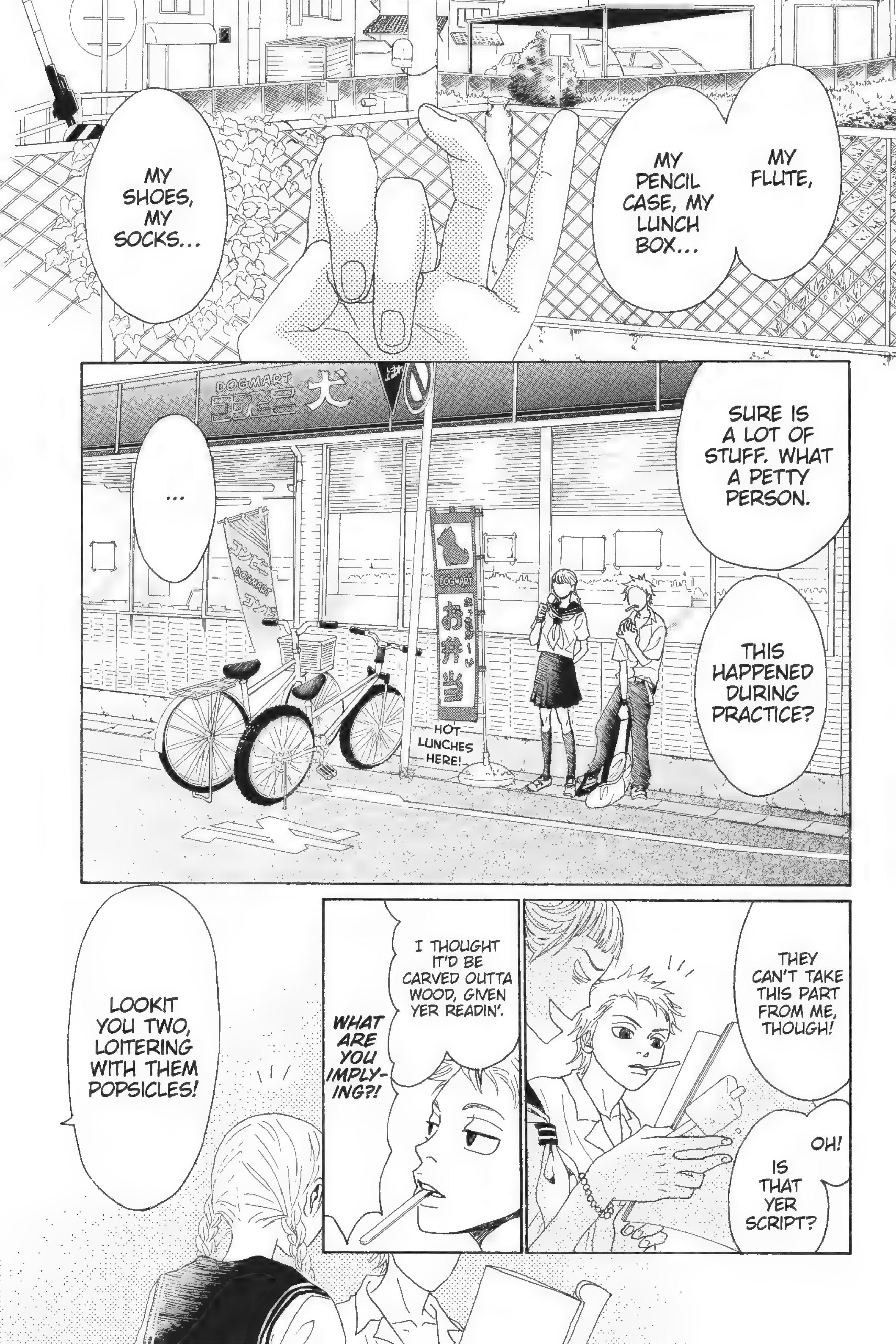

WHY...
HM?
WHY WAS I CHOSEN FOR THE PART?
THE WAY YOU READ IT IN *MONOTONE* LIKE THAT WAS INTERESTING.
AH!
OF COURSE, FOR THE REAL THING, WE'LL PROBABLY WANT SOMETHING A LITTLE... BETTER.
WE'LL REVISE THE SCRIPT AND DROP MOST OF YOUR LINES, ANYWAY.
I'LL BE DIRECTING, SO I'LL MAKE SURE TO MAKE YOUR PART EASY ON YOU.
ぎゅっ
GRIP

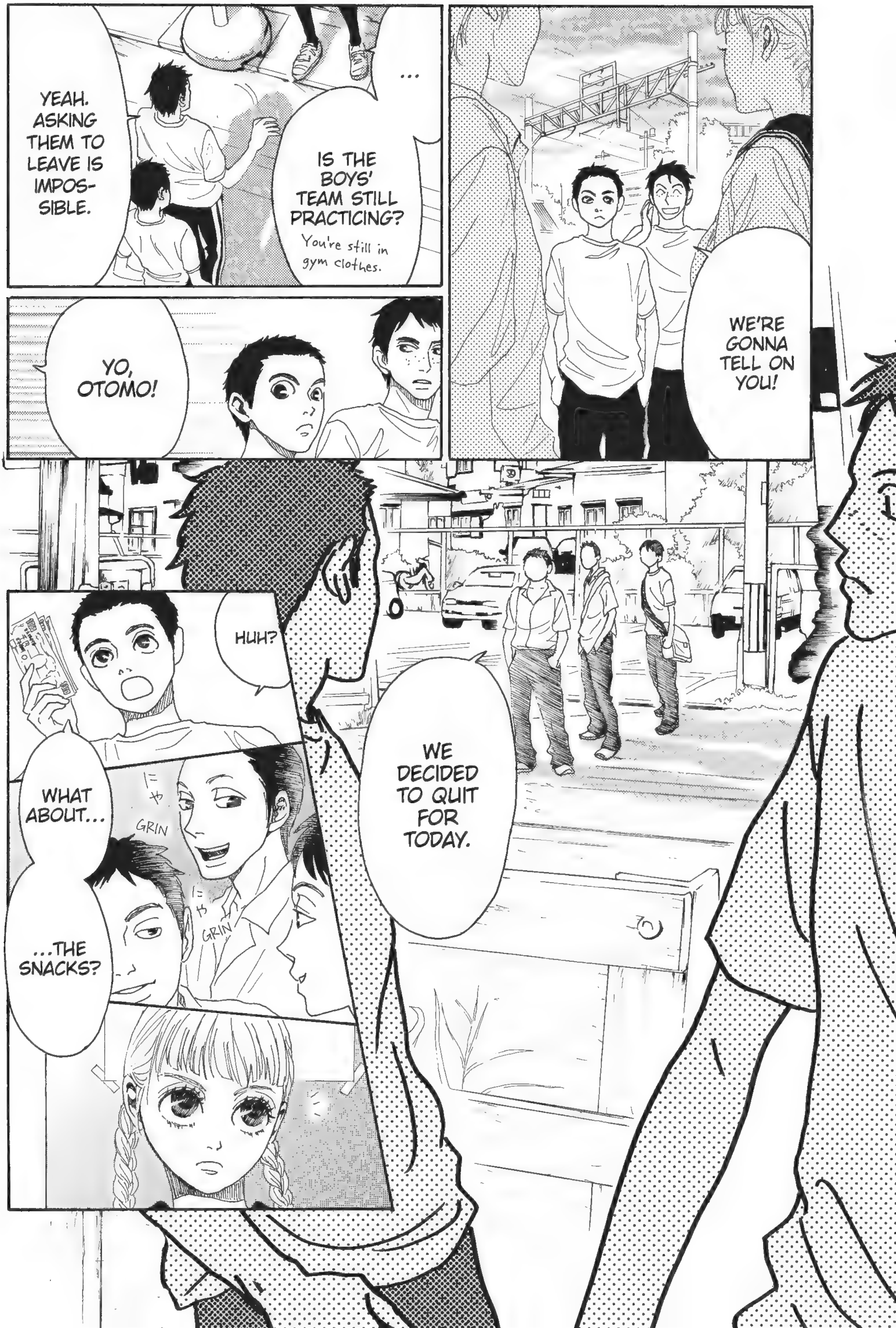

ガタッ
CLATTER
PLEASE!
DON'T CUT ANY OF MY LINES!
I—
I CAN DO IT!
I'M VERY CAPABLE WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE!
どっ
OH HO?
HA HA HA!
I WAS COUNTING ON THAT ATTITUDE, NATSUME-CHAN!
ARGH!!

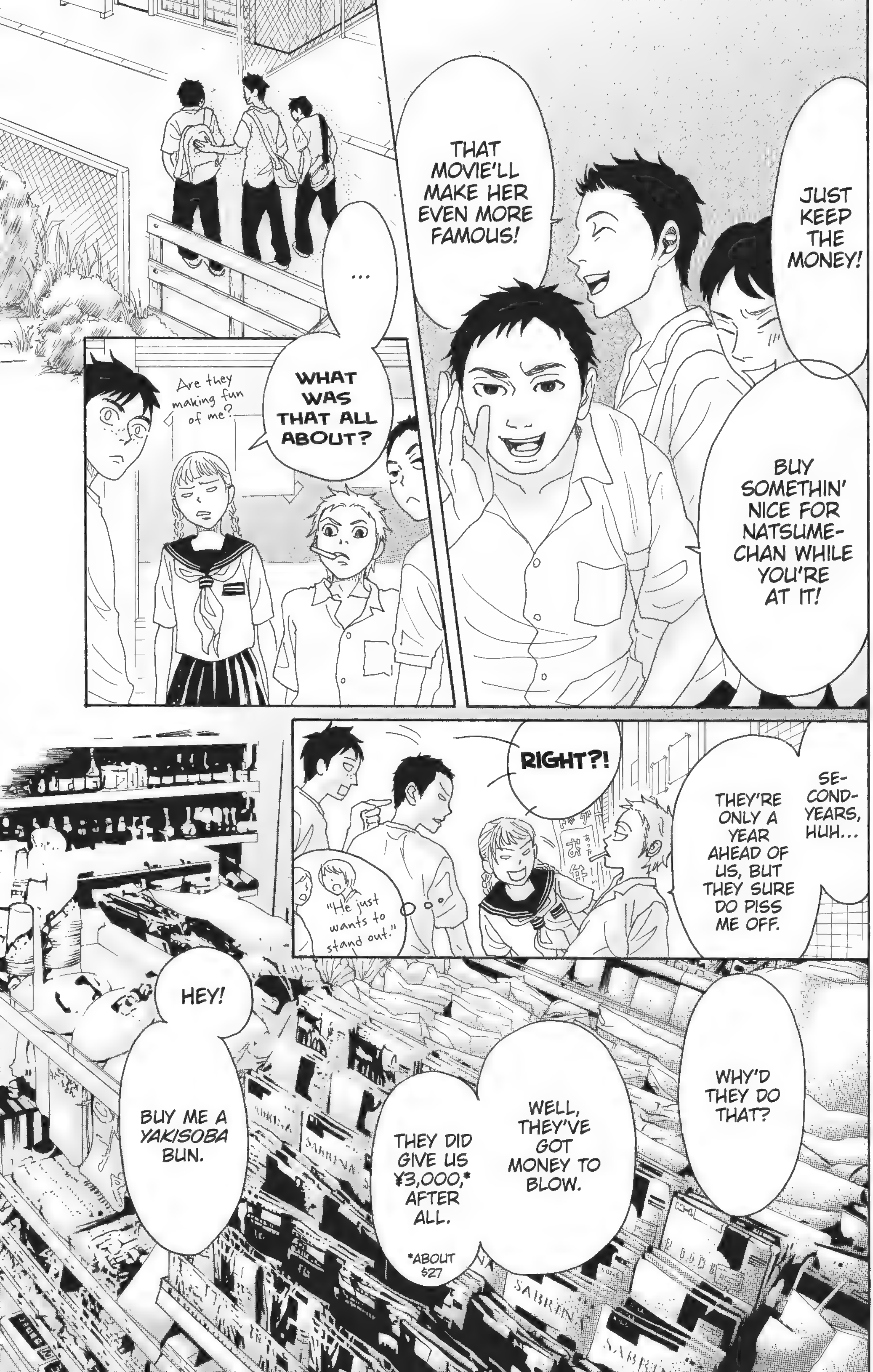

NEWS Dreamsday, September Somethingth, 2005 CULTURE
2005年（平成17年）9月吉日（夢曜日）（28）
文化・芸能
リハウジングあの娘
THE REHOUSING GIRL
CMの今度は映画に!
NOW IN A MOVIE!
NATSUME MOCHIZUKI (13)
CMで話題のあ
THE GIRL FROM THE VERY POPULAR COMMERCIAL
WHAT?!
1部 ¥150 (incl. tax) 130円
ROAD TO GERMANY
2006 WORLD CUP
本気
THE ULTIMATE EFFORT
RRRAGH!!
COACH ZICO'S
ジーコ監督の
BENCHED
DAD, PLEASE!
I REALLY WANT TO BE IN THIS MOVIE!
PASSION
POSSIBILITY
RRRRGH...!
HIT ME IF YOU WANT! I'LL STILL–
SLAP
バシッ
YEOWCH!
MY POSITION NEVER CHANGED!
オロ
オロ
FLUSTERED

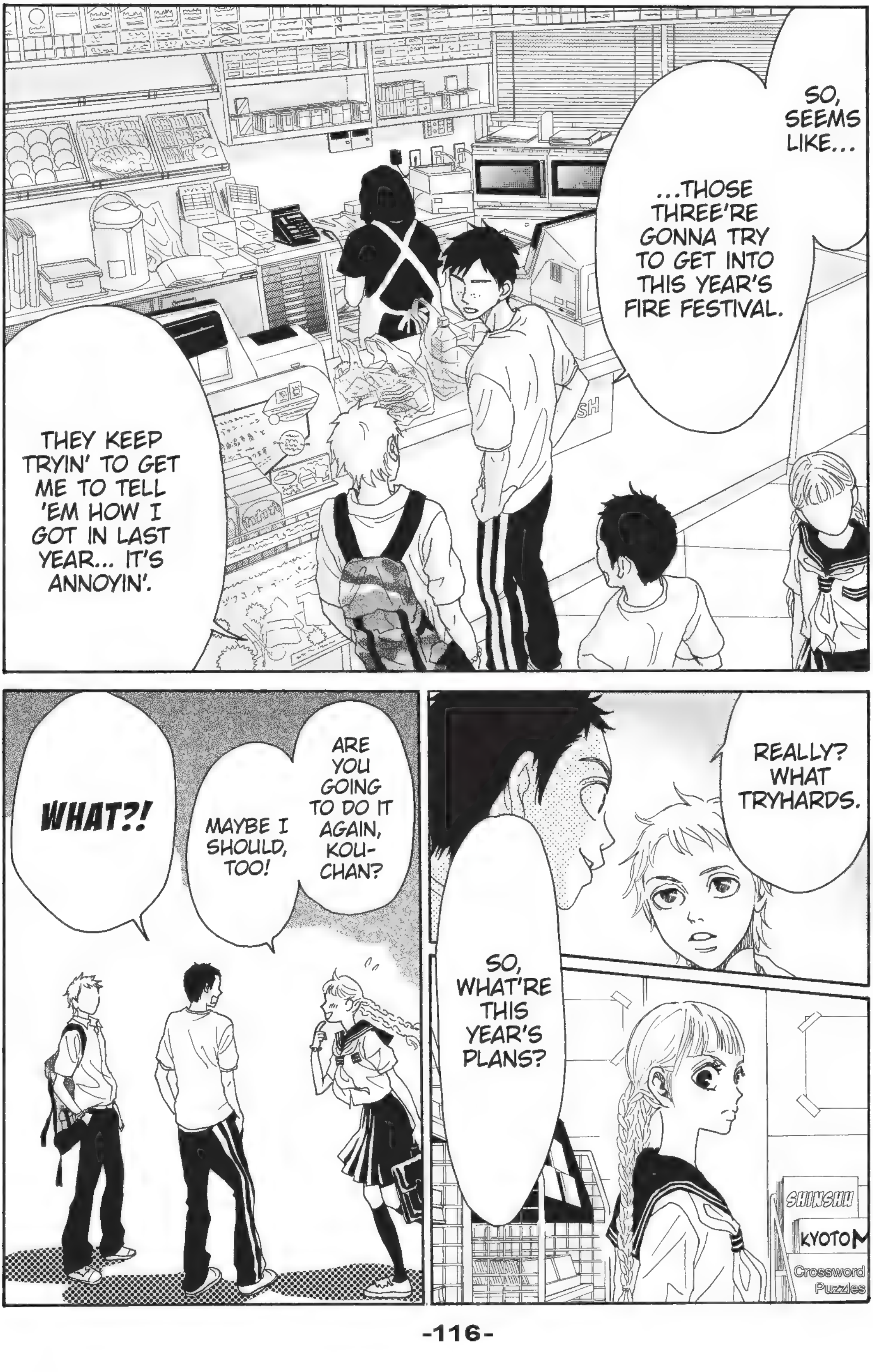

I JUST... DON'T EVER DISAPPEAR LIKE THAT AGAIN!
TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
WHOA! A MOVIE?!
WAY COOL!
YOU THE LEAD?
NO, SUPPORTING.
LAME!
YOU SHOULD CUT YOUR HAIR.
LOOK. IT MAKES YOU STAND OUT TOO MUCH.
YEAH.
Ugh...
...
...HUH?


THEY WERE STOLEN AGAIN?
YOU SURE DO STAND OUT...
ARE YOU SAYING I'M AT FAULT?
OH, NO, NOTHIN' LIKE THAT!
IT'S JUST...
...YOU'LL BE MISSIN' CLASS NEXT MONTH FOR THAT MOVIE FILMING, WON'T YA?
LOTSA FOLK DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
...
TAKE CARE, HEAR?

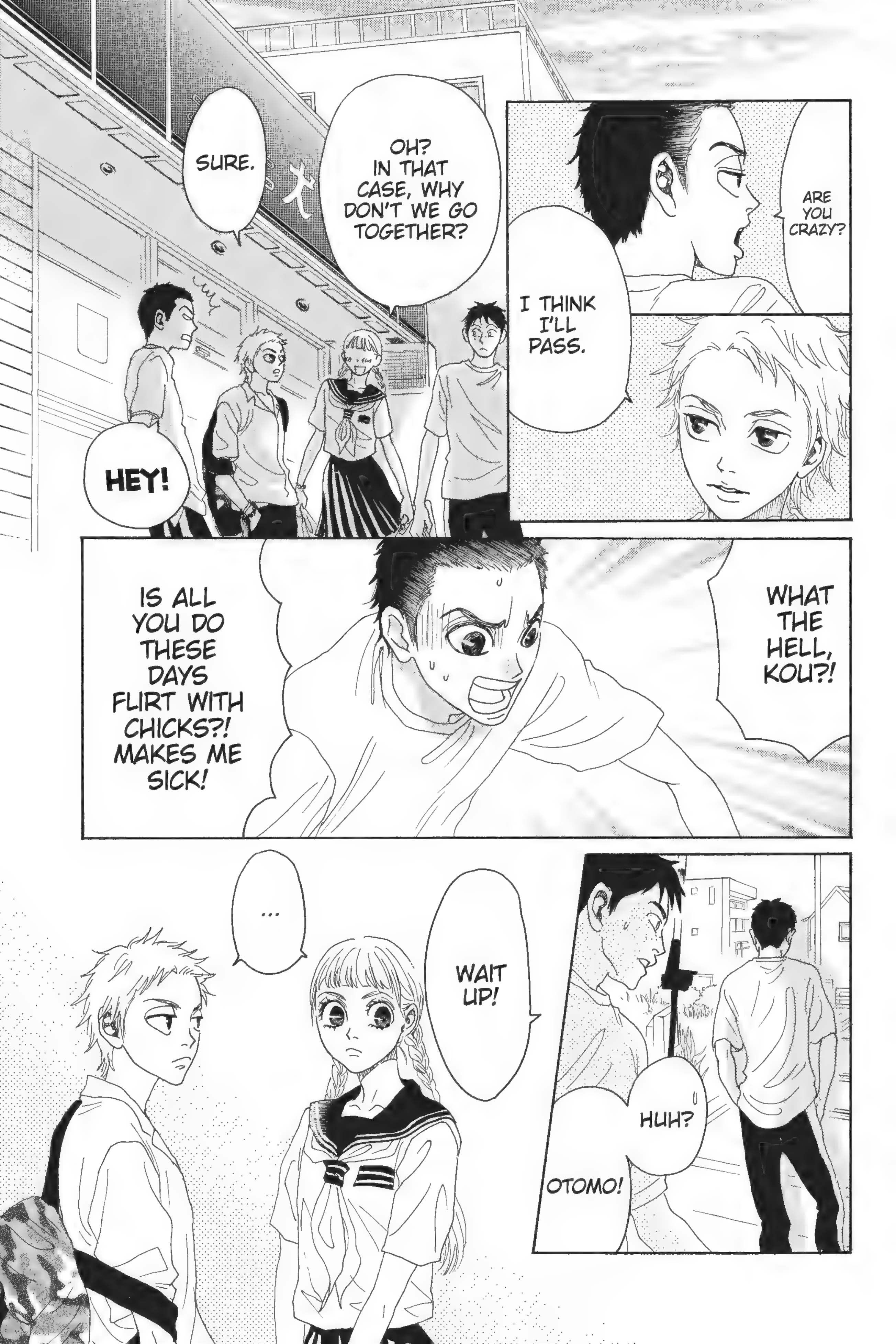

MY FLUTE,
MY PENCIL CASE, MY LUNCH BOX…
MY SHOES, MY SOCKS…
SURE IS A LOT OF STUFF. WHAT A PETTY PERSON.
THIS HAPPENED DURING PRACTICE?
…
DOGMART コンビニ 犬
DOGMART お弁当
HOT LUNCHES HERE!
コンビニ DOGMART コンビニ
THEY CAN'T TAKE THIS PART FROM ME, THOUGH!
OH! IS THAT YER SCRIPT?
I THOUGHT IT'D BE CARVED OUTTA WOOD, GIVEN YER READIN'.
WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING?!
LOOKIT YOU TWO, LOITERING WITH THEM POPSICLES!

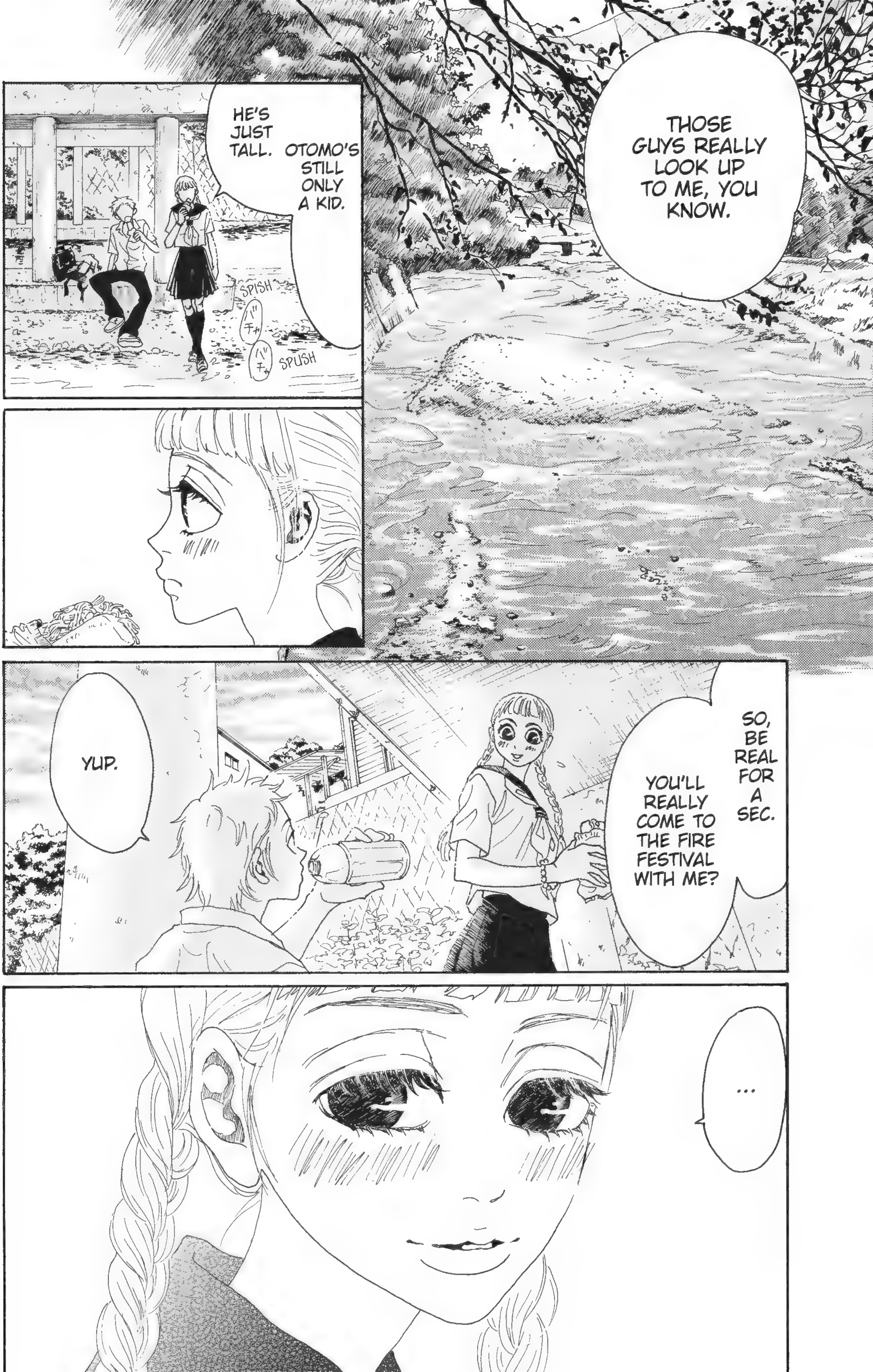

YEAH. ASKING THEM TO LEAVE IS IMPOSSIBLE.
...
IS THE BOYS' TEAM STILL PRACTICING?
You're still in gym clothes.
YO, OTOMO!
WE'RE GONNA TELL ON YOU!
WE DECIDED TO QUIT FOR TODAY.
HUH?
WHAT ABOUT...
にや GRIN
にや GRIN
...THE SNACKS?

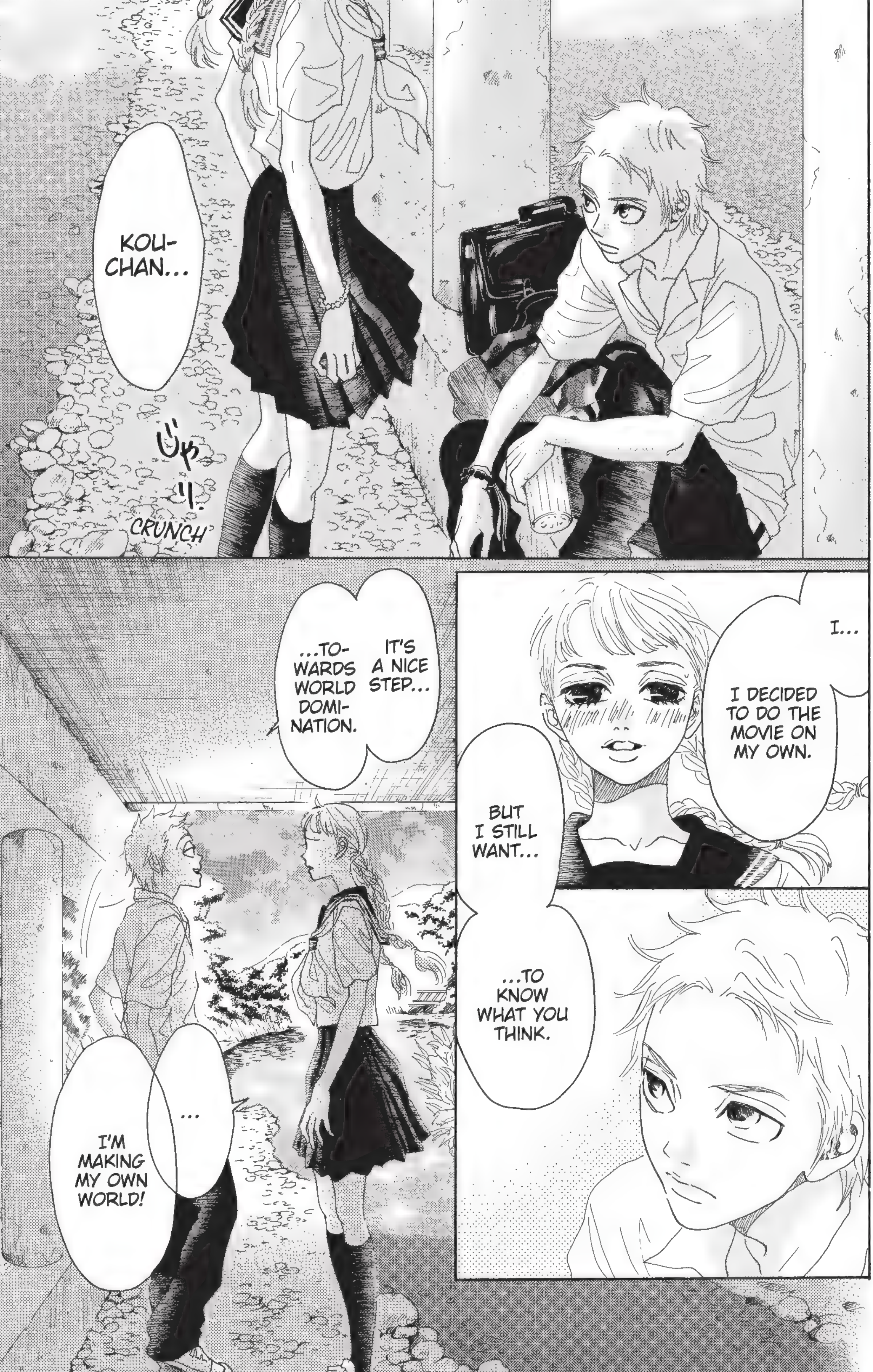

JUST KEEP THE MONEY!
THAT MOVIE'LL MAKE HER EVEN MORE FAMOUS!
BUY SOMETHIN' NICE FOR NATSUME-CHAN WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!
...
WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
Are they making fun of me?
SECOND-YEARS, HUH...
THEY'RE ONLY A YEAR AHEAD OF US, BUT THEY SURE DO PISS ME OFF.
RIGHT?!
"He just wants to stand out."
WHY'D THEY DO THAT?
WELL, THEY'VE GOT MONEY TO BLOW.
THEY DID GIVE US ¥3,000,* AFTER ALL.
*ABOUT $27
HEY!
BUY ME A *YAKISOBA* BUN.

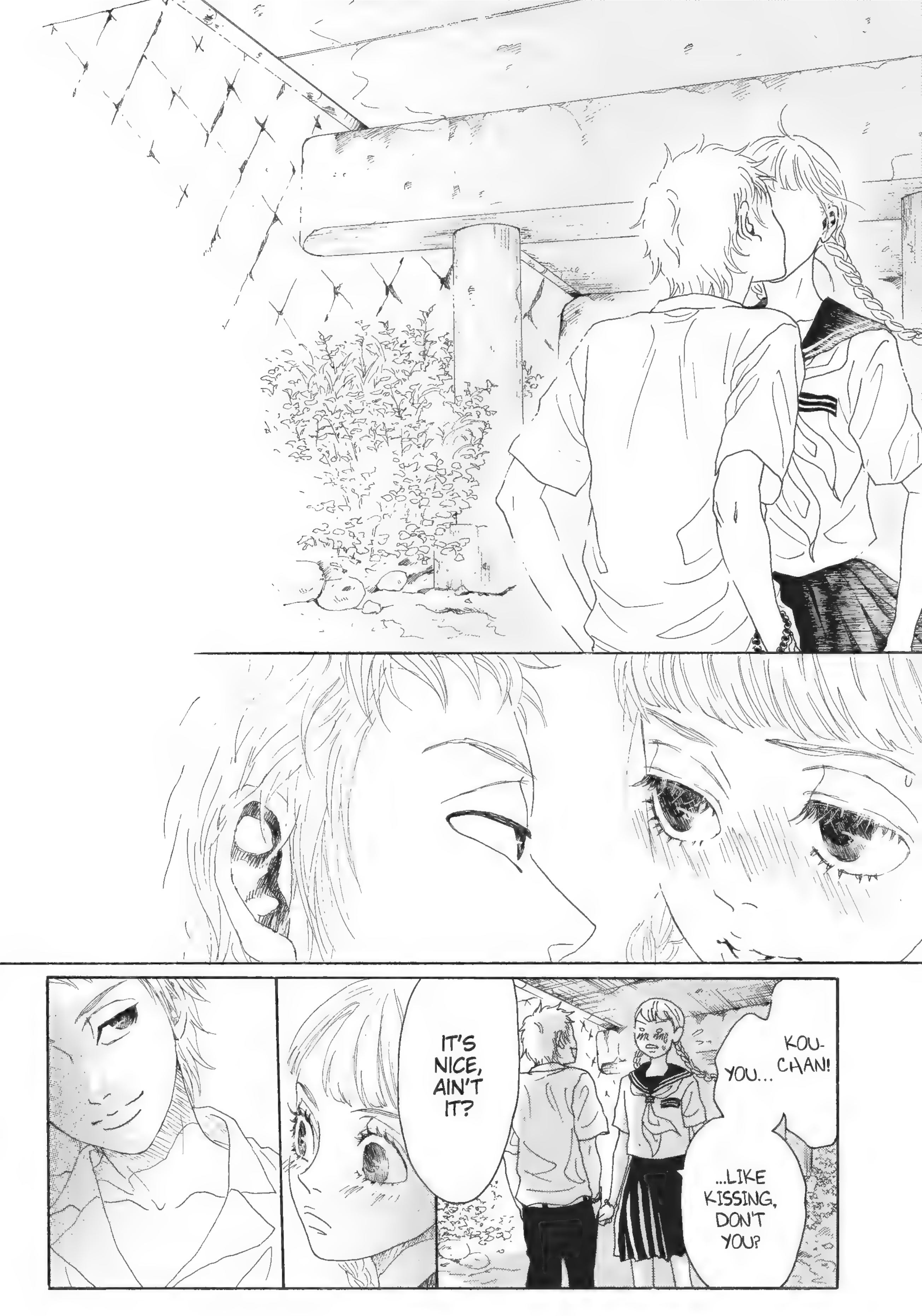


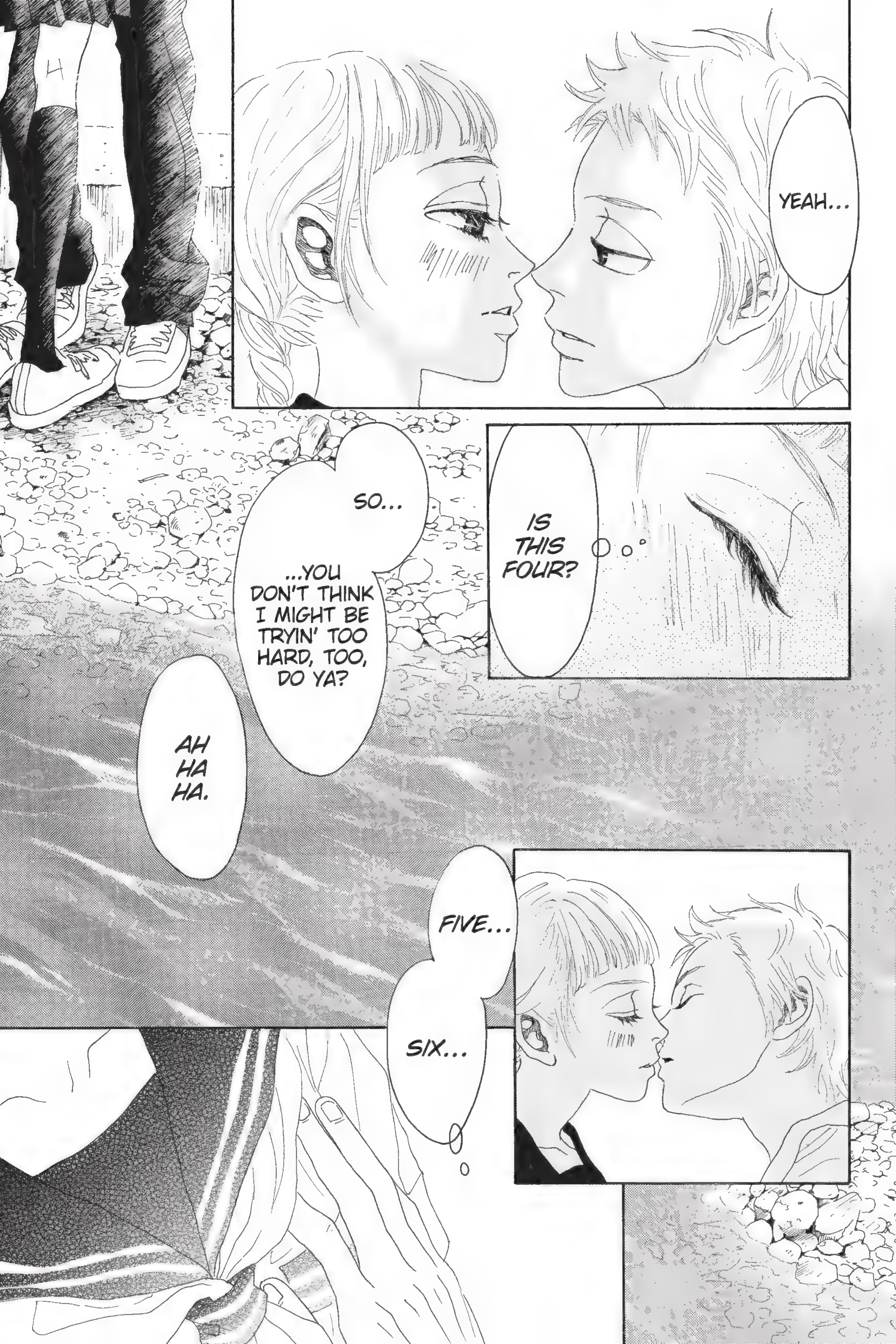
SO, SEEMS LIKE...
...THOSE THREE'RE GONNA TRY TO GET INTO THIS YEAR'S FIRE FESTIVAL.
THEY KEEP TRYIN' TO GET ME TO TELL 'EM HOW I GOT IN LAST YEAR... IT'S ANNOYIN'.
REALLY? WHAT TRYHARDS.
SO, WHAT'RE THIS YEAR'S PLANS?
SHINSHU
KYOTO M
Crossword Puzzles
ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT AGAIN, KOU-CHAN?
MAYBE I SHOULD, TOO!
WHAT?!

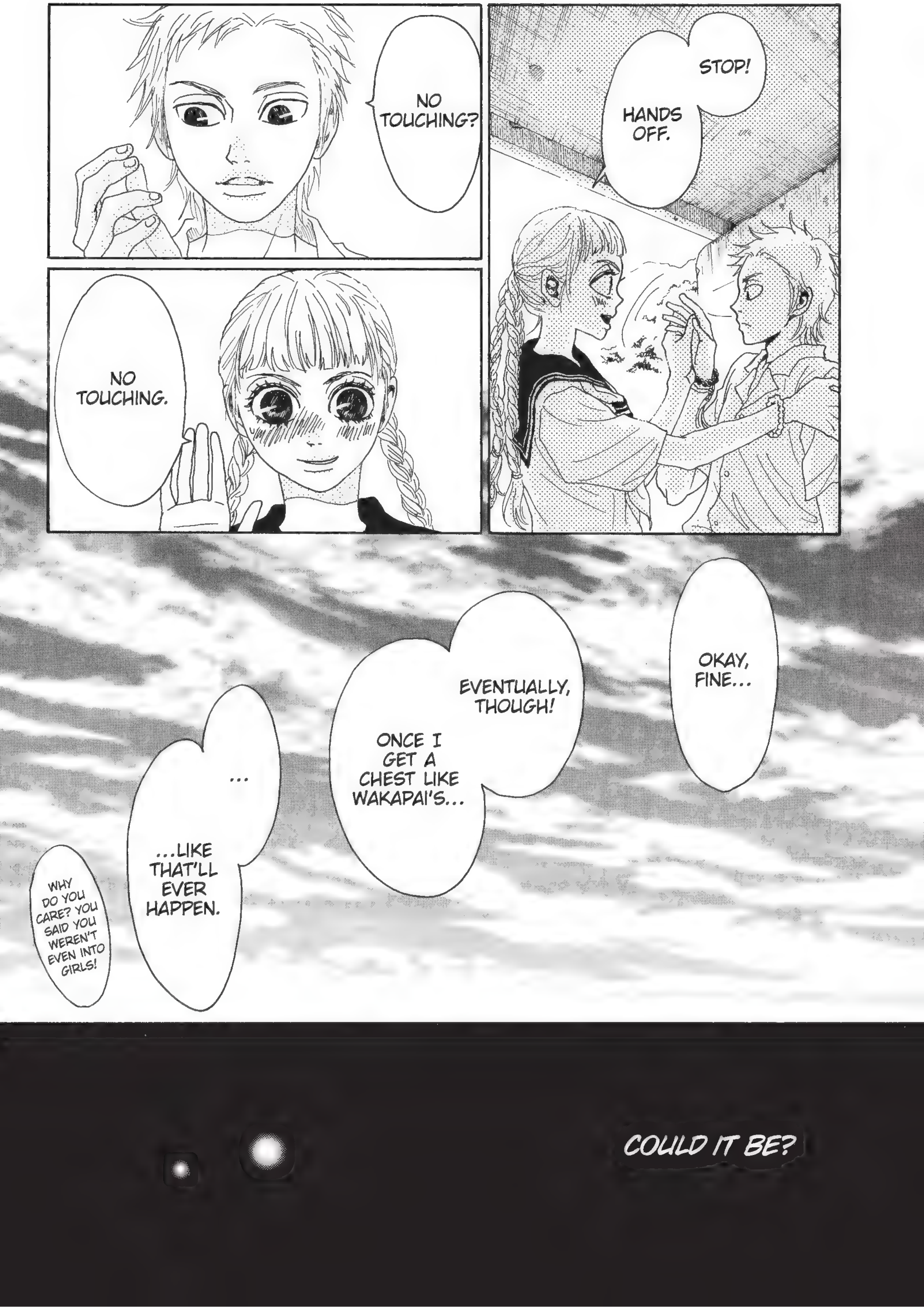

OH? IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T WE GO TOGETHER?
SURE.
HEY!
ARE YOU CRAZY?
I THINK I'LL PASS.
WHAT THE HELL, KOU?!
IS ALL YOU DO THESE DAYS FLIRT WITH CHICKS?! MAKES ME SICK!
OTOMO!
HUH?
WAIT UP!
...

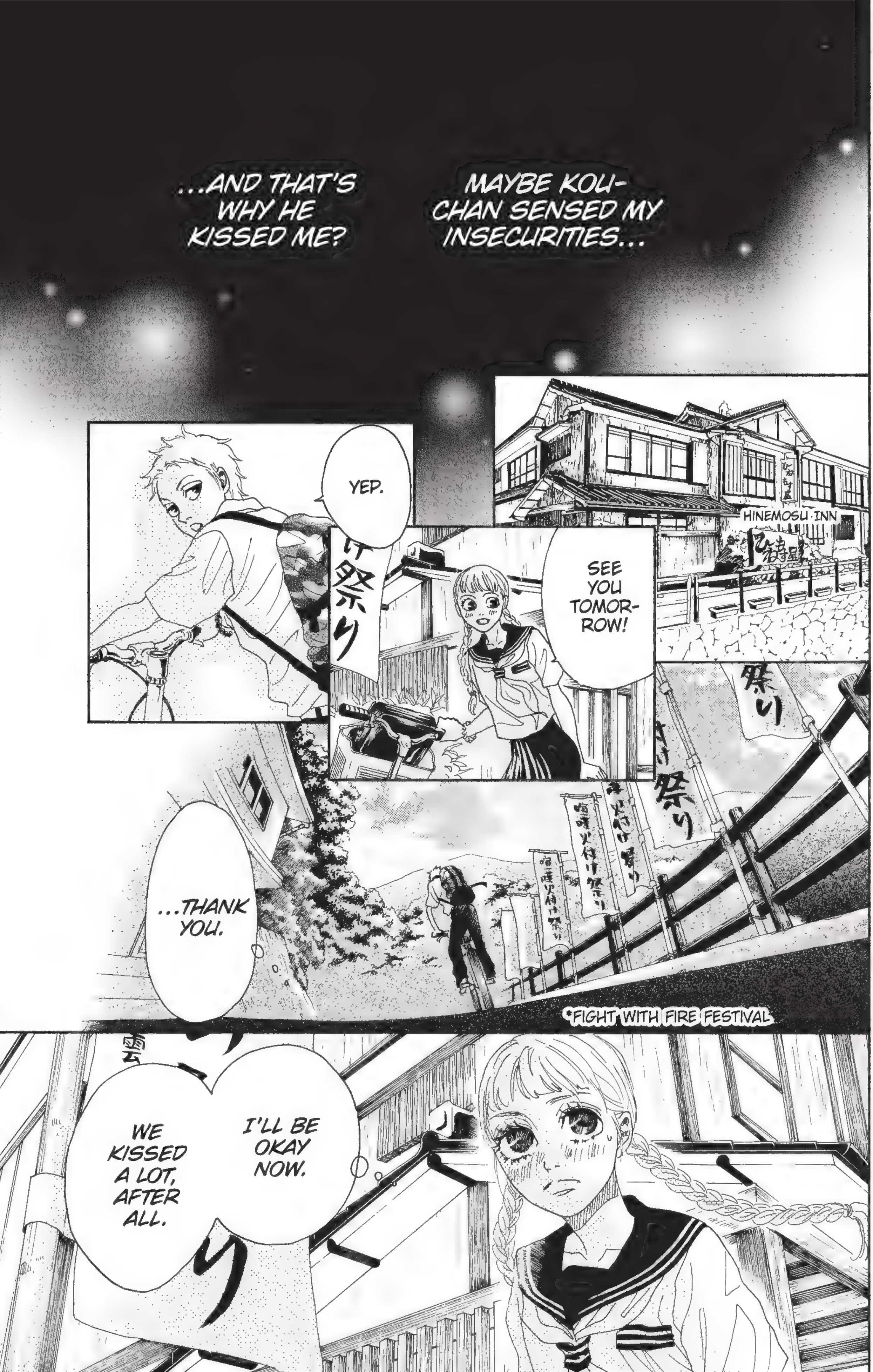

THOSE GUYS REALLY LOOK UP TO ME, YOU KNOW.
OTOMO'S STILL ONLY A KID.
HE'S JUST TALL.
SPISH
バチャ
バチャ
SPLISH
SO, BE REAL FOR A SEC.
YOU'LL REALLY COME TO THE FIRE FESTIVAL WITH ME?
YUP.
...

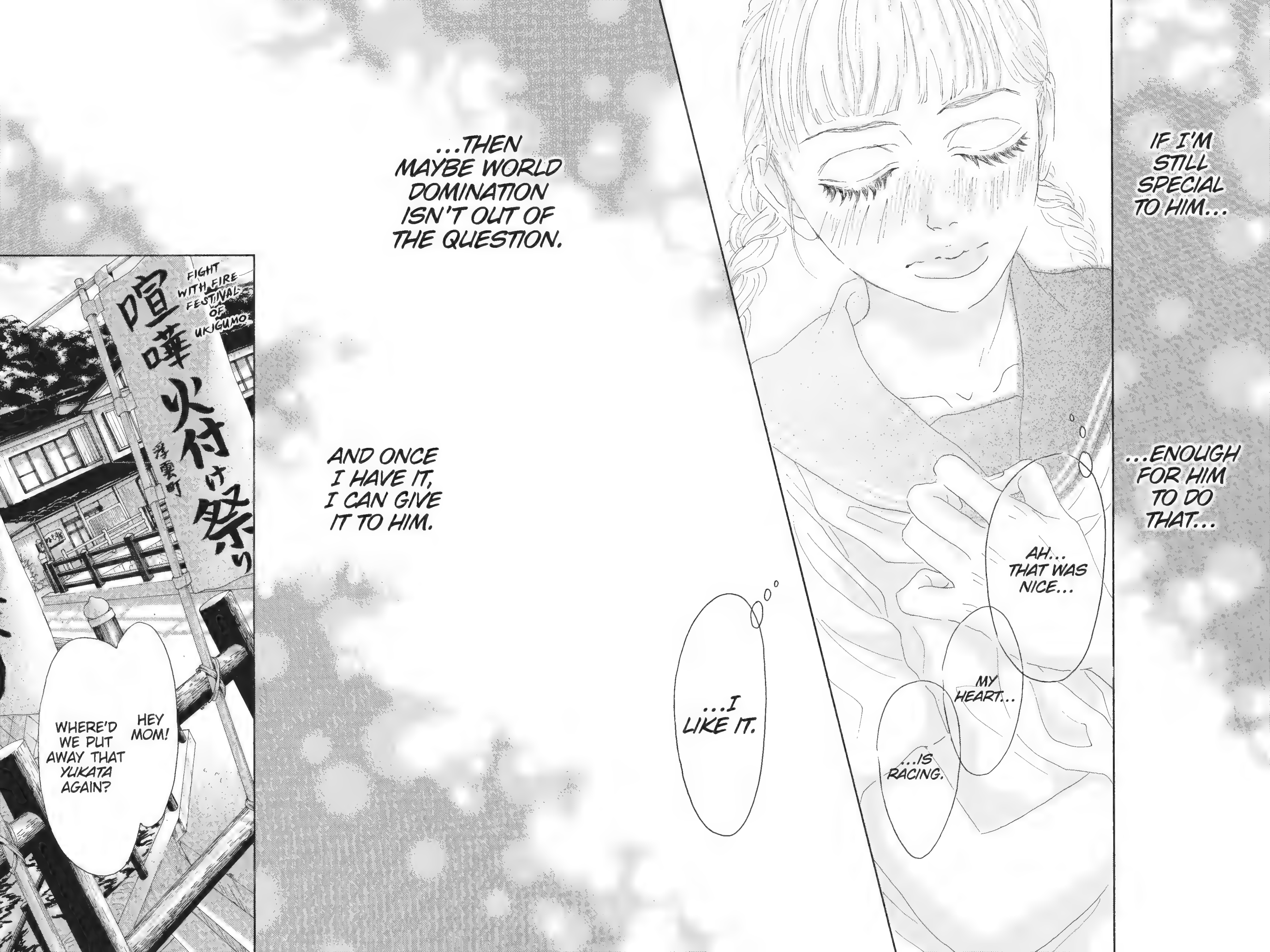

KOU-CHAN...
じゃり。
CRUNCH
I...
I DECIDED TO DO THE MOVIE ON MY OWN.
BUT I STILL WANT...
...TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.
IT'S A NICE STEP...
...TOWARDS WORLD DOMINATION.
...
I'M MAKING MY OWN WORLD!

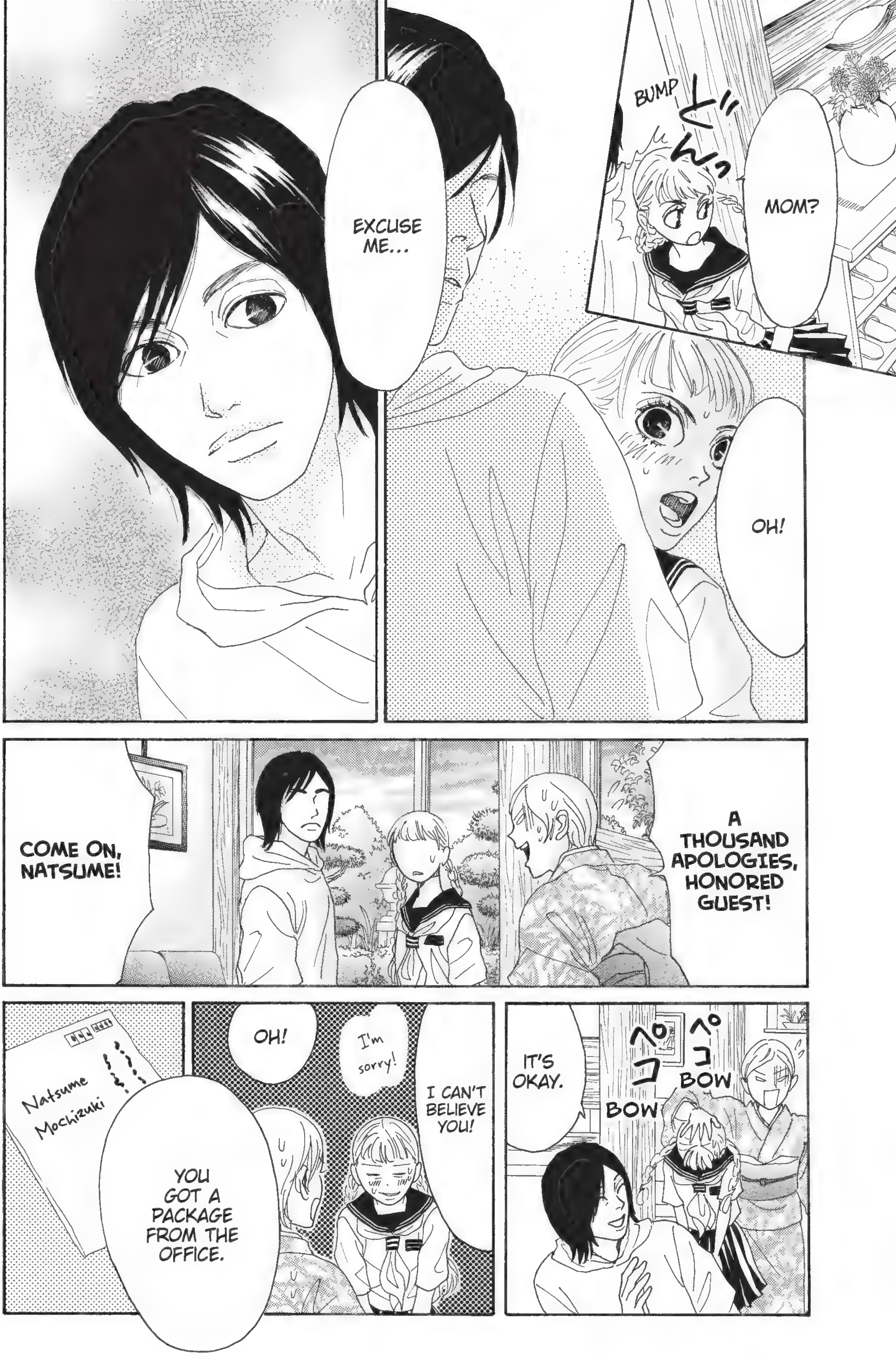

KOU-CHAN!
YOU...
...LIKE KISSING, DON'T YOU?
IT'S NICE, AIN'T IT?

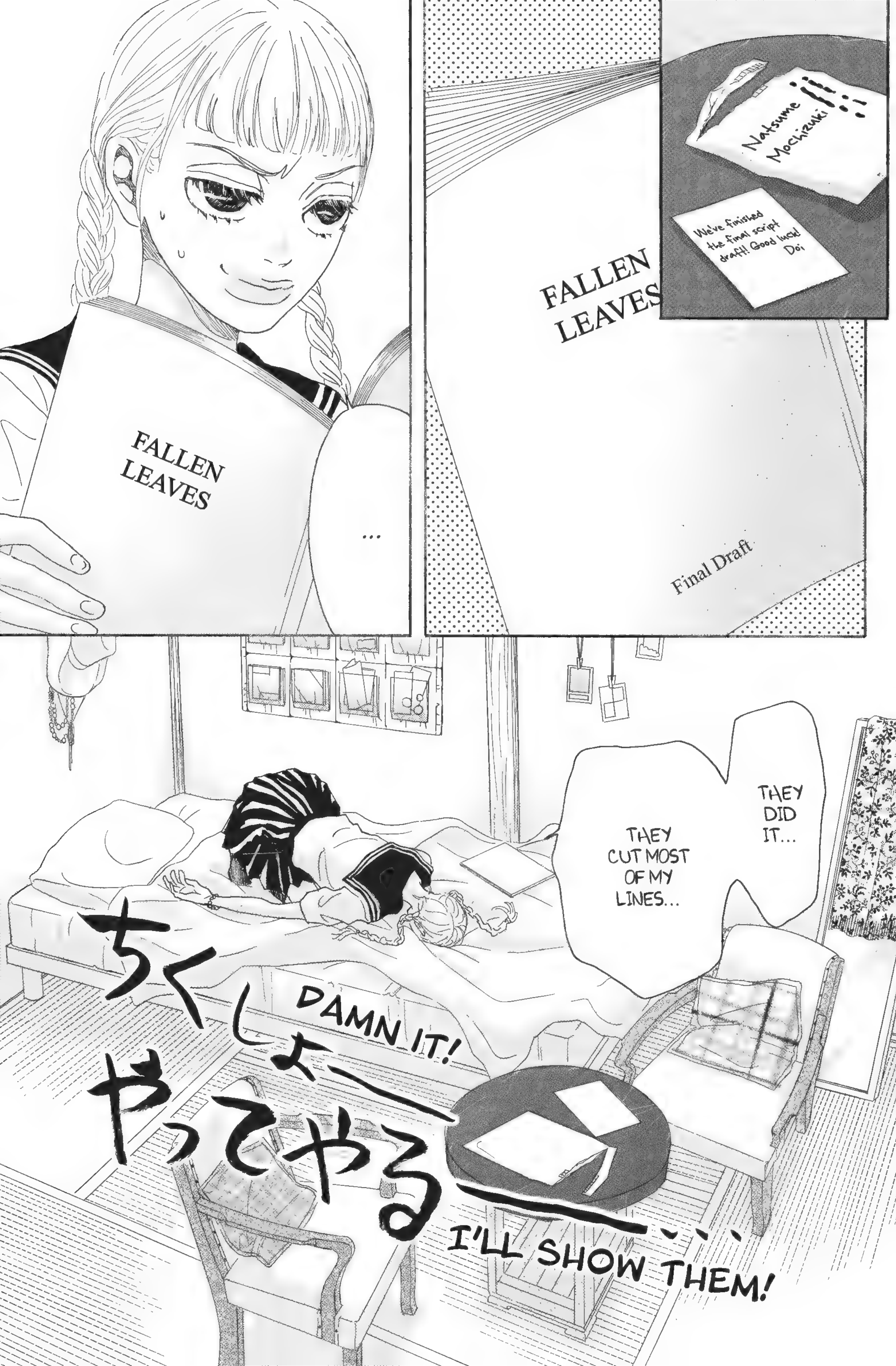

YEAH...
IS THIS FOUR?
SO...
...YOU DON'T THINK I MIGHT BE TRYIN' TOO HARD, TOO, DO YA?
AH HA HA.
FIVE...
SIX...


STOP! HANDS OFF.
NO TOUCHING?
NO TOUCHING.
OKAY, FINE...
EVENTUALLY, THOUGH! ONCE I GET A CHEST LIKE WAKAPAI'S...
... ...LIKE THAT'LL EVER HAPPEN.
WHY DO YOU CARE? YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T EVEN INTO GIRLS!
COULD IT BE?

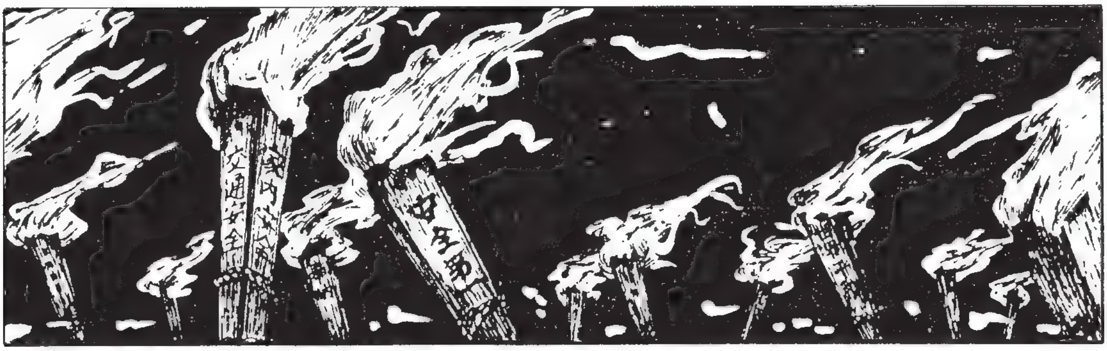

MAYBE KOU-CHAN SENSED MY INSECURITIES...
...AND THAT'S WHY HE KISSED ME?
HINEMOSU INN
YEP.
SEE YOU TOMORROW!
祭り
喧嘩火付け祭り
...THANK YOU.
*FIGHT WITH FIRE FESTIVAL
I'LL BE OKAY NOW.
WE KISSED A LOT, AFTER ALL.


IF I'M STILL SPECIAL TO HIM...
...ENOUGH FOR HIM TO DO THAT...
AH... THAT WAS NICE...
MY HEART...
...IS RACING.
...I LIKE IT.
...THEN MAYBE WORLD DOMINATION ISN'T OUT OF THE QUESTION.
AND ONCE I HAVE IT, I CAN GIVE IT TO HIM.
喧嘩火付け祭り
浮雲町
FIGHT WITH FIRE FESTIVAL OF UKIGUMO.
HEY MOM!
WHERE'D WE PUT AWAY THAT *YUKATA* AGAIN?


BUMP
どんっ
MOM?
OH!
EXCUSE ME...
A THOUSAND APOLOGIES, HONORED GUEST!
COME ON, NATSUME!
ぺコ
BOW
ぺコ
BOW
IT'S OKAY.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU!
I'm sorry!
OH!
YOU GOT A PACKAGE FROM THE OFFICE.
Natsume Mochizuki

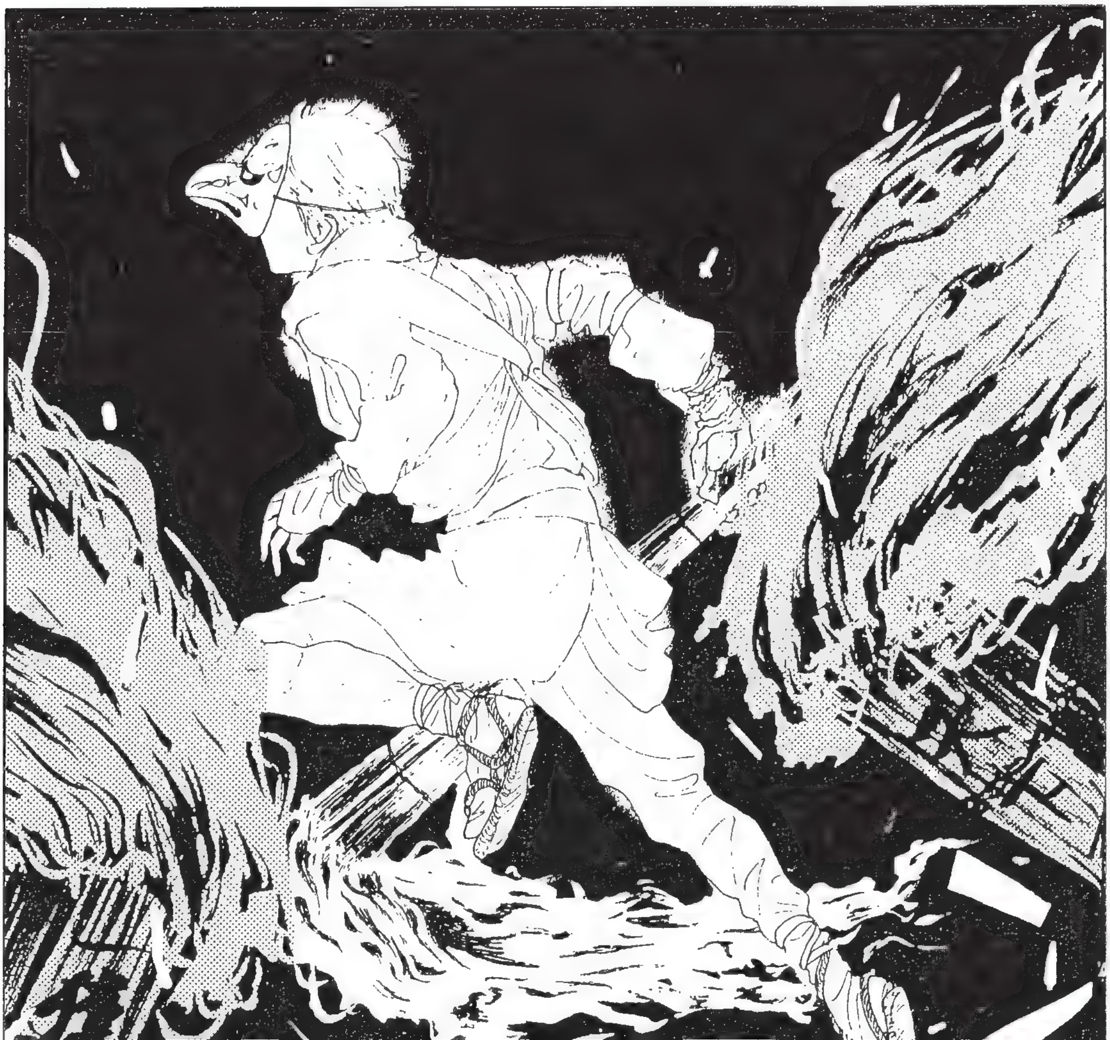

Natsume Mochizuki
We've finished the final script draft! Good luck! Doi
FALLEN LEAVES
Final Draft
FALLEN LEAVES
...
THEY DID IT...
THEY CUT MOST OF MY LINES...
ちくしょー
DAMN IT!
やってやるーー、、、
I'LL SHOW THEM!

THAT LIGHT…



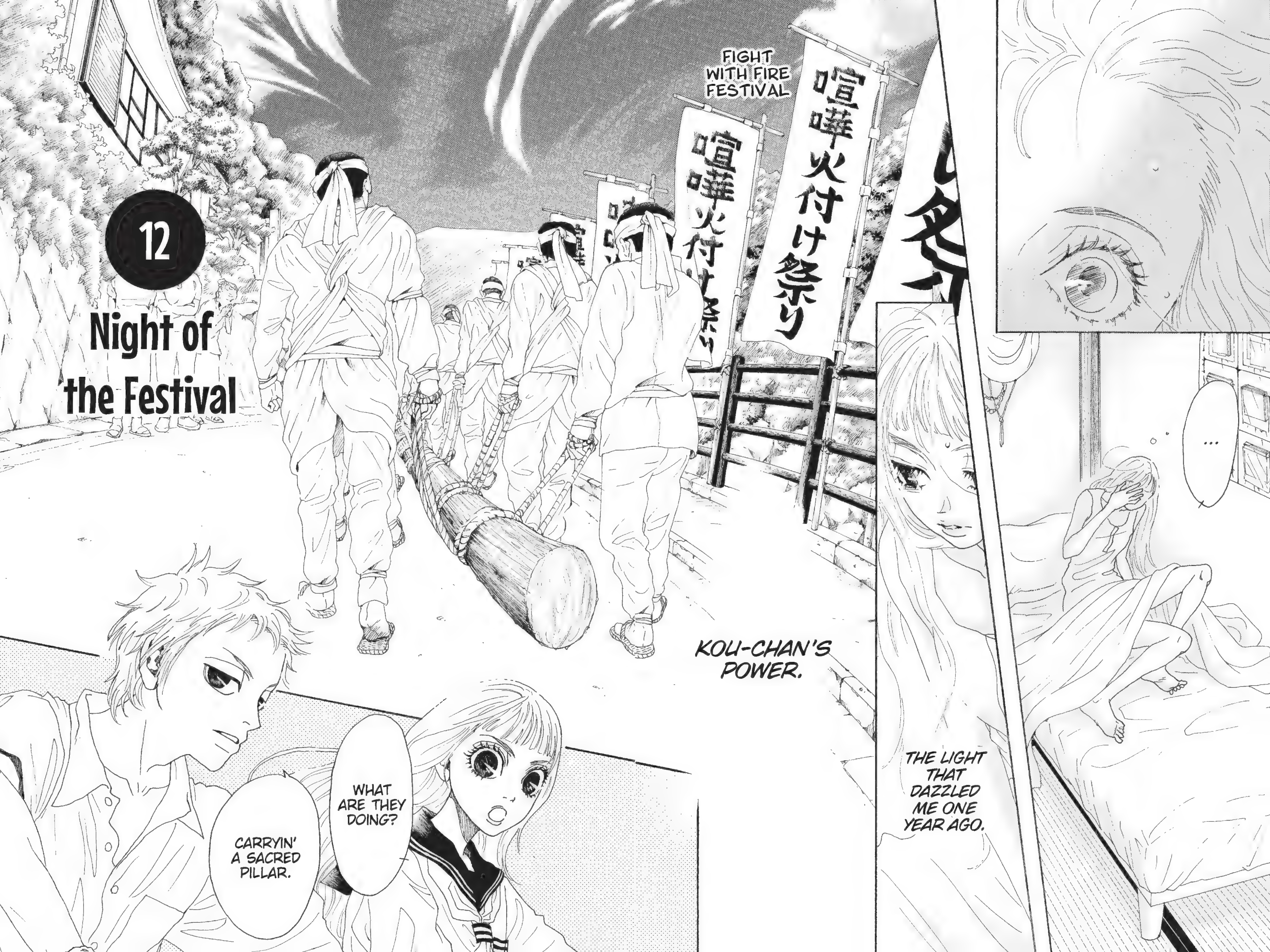
IT TORE OUT MY HEART.

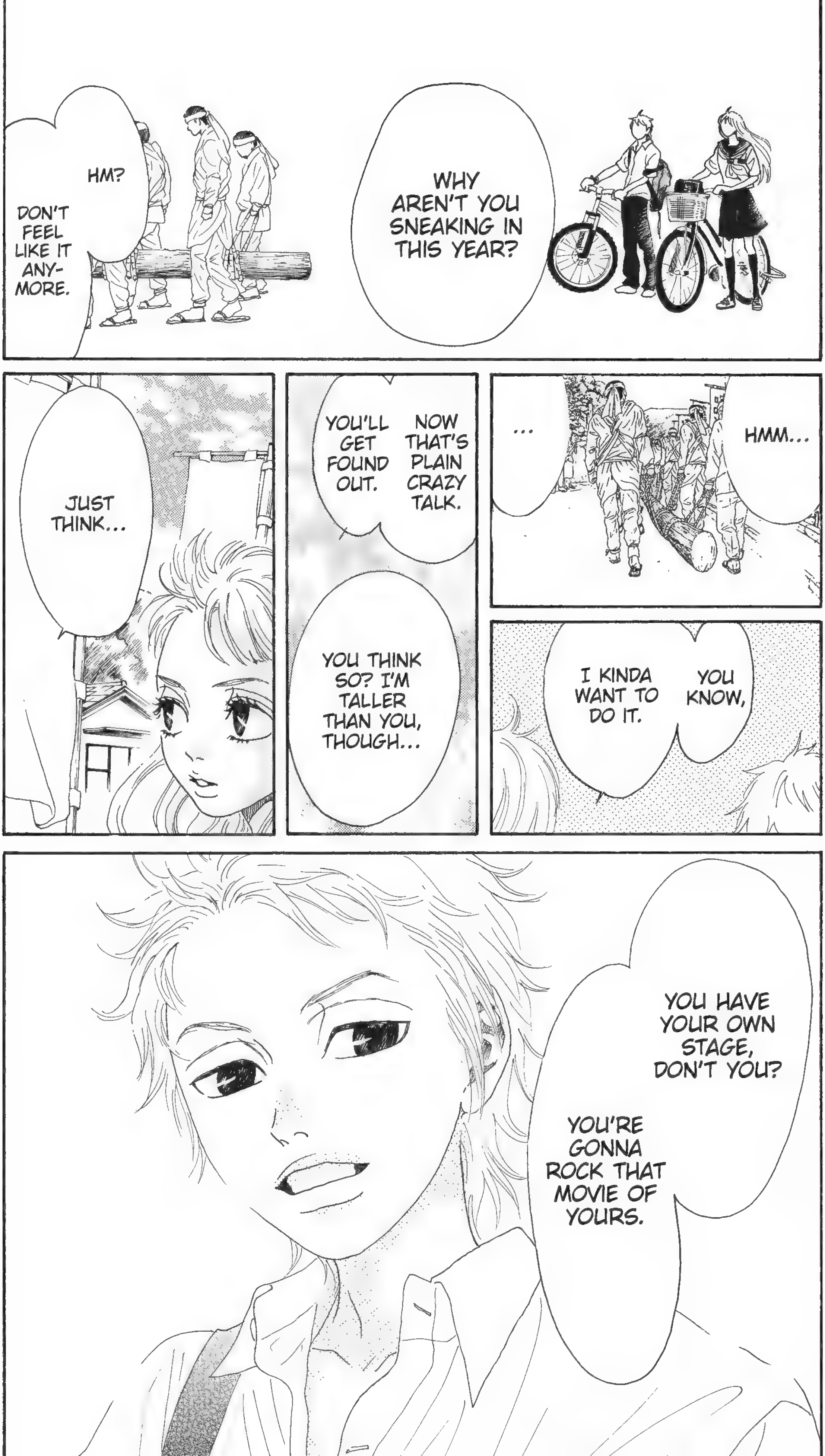
IT MADE ME CRY OUT, "I WANT IT!"

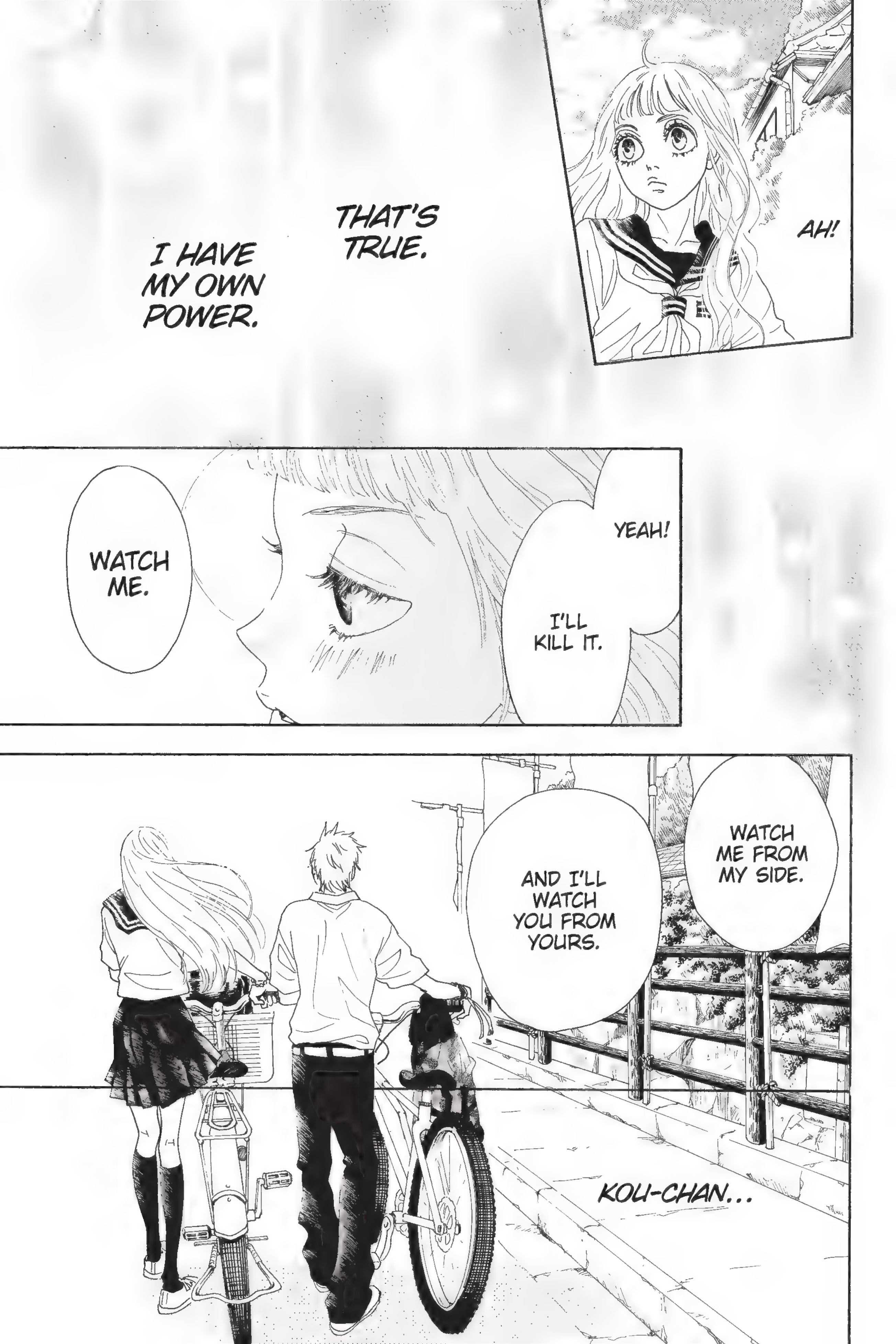


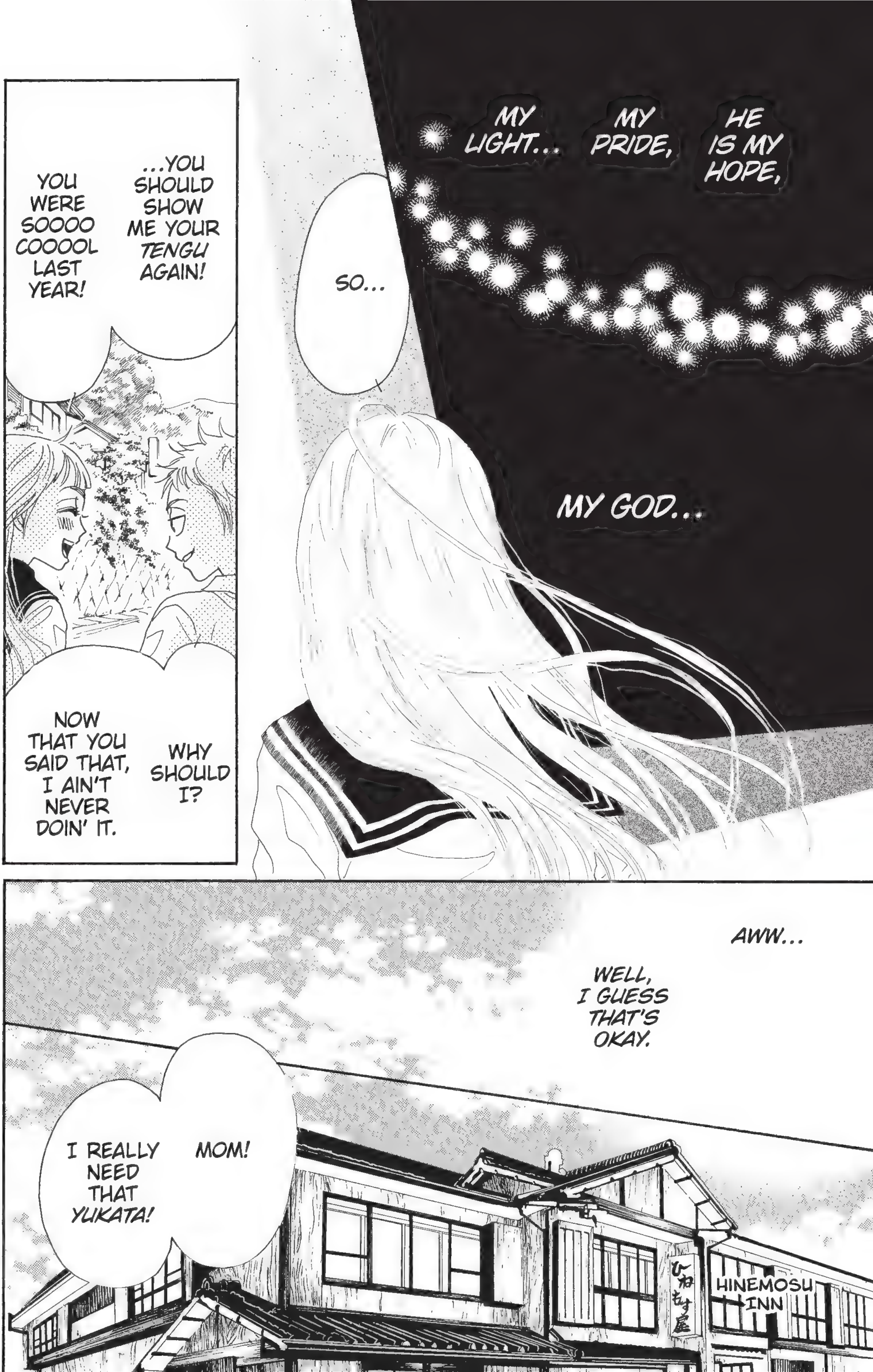
12

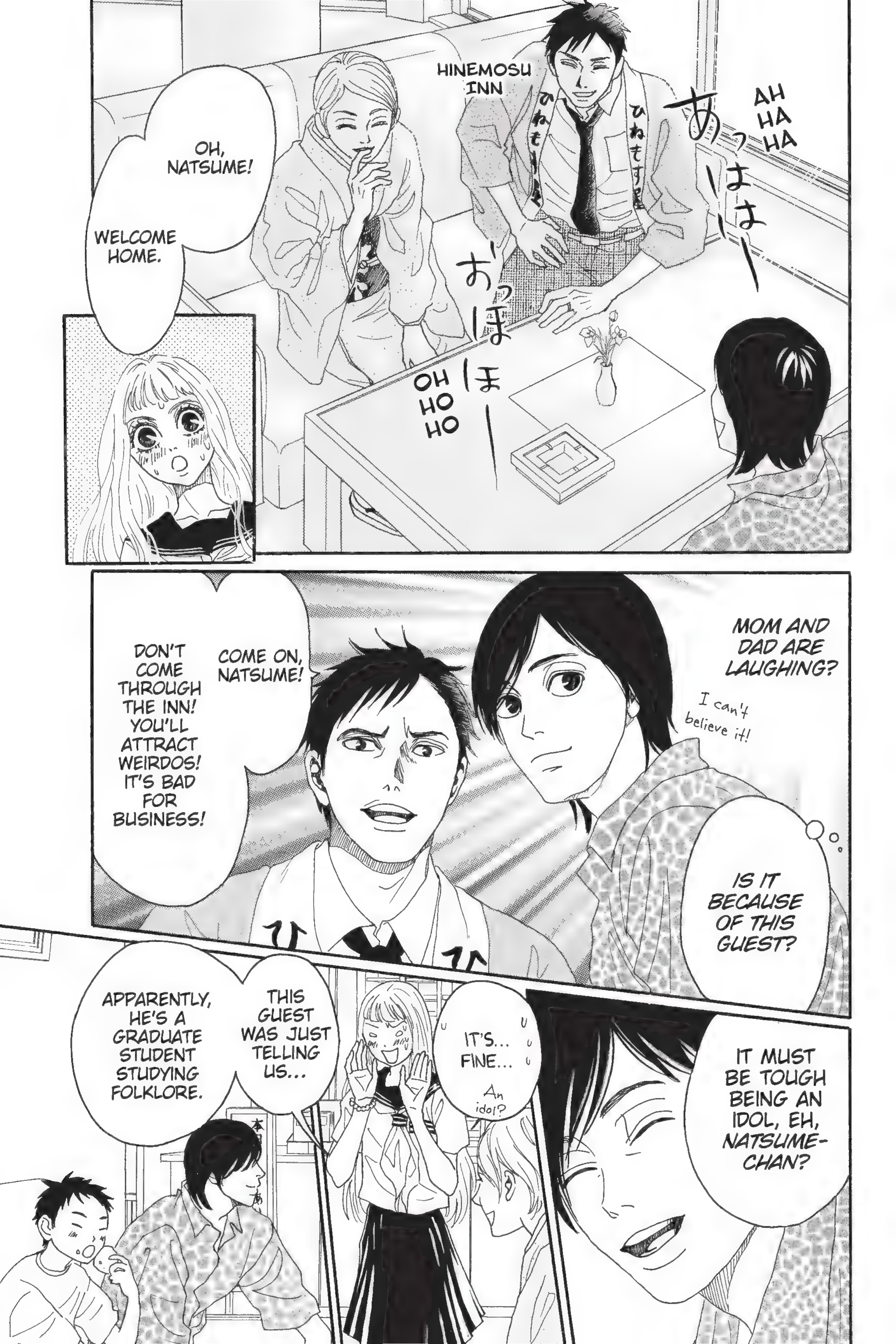
Night of the Festival

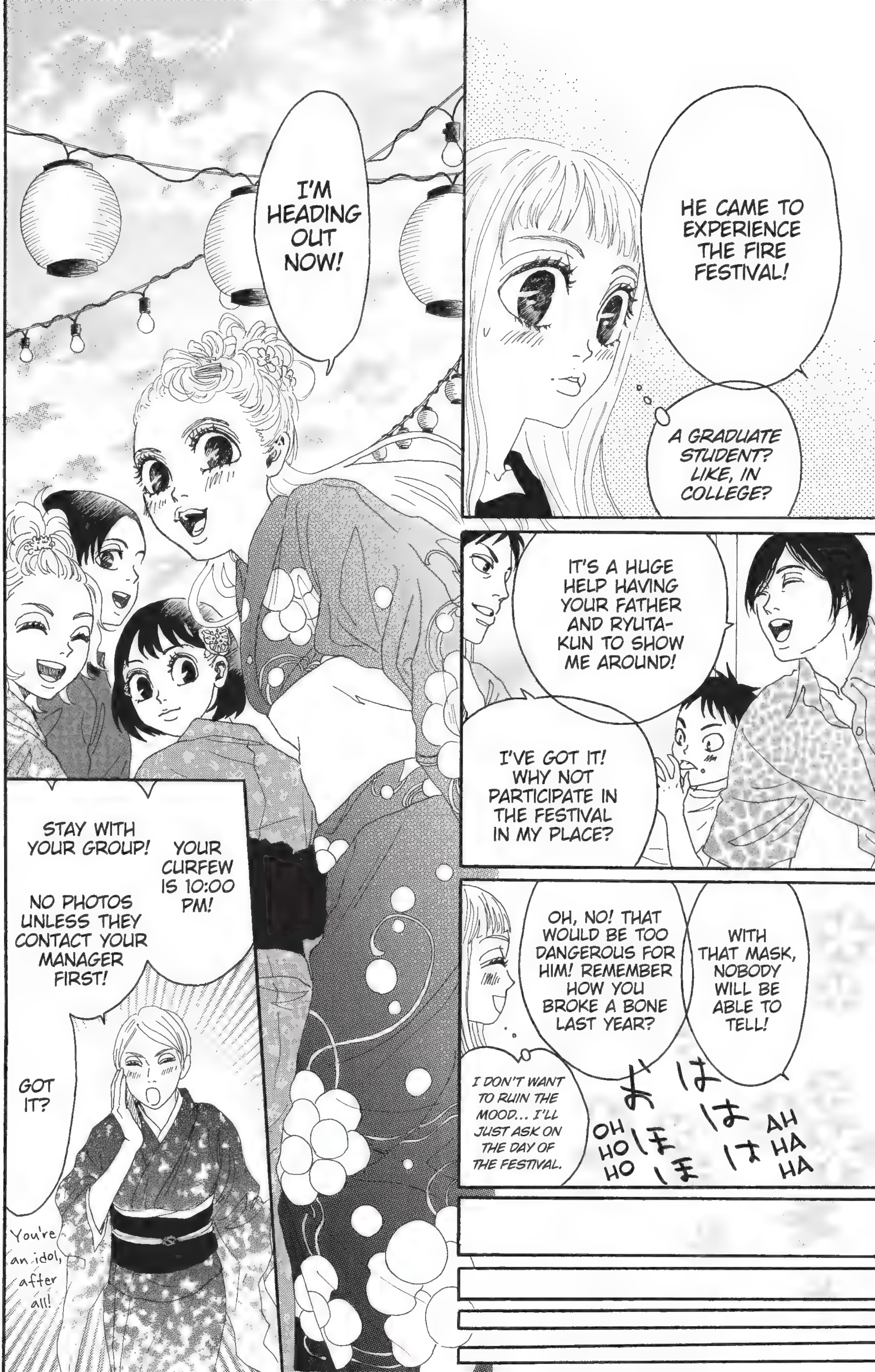

…
THE LIGHT THAT DAZZLED ME ONE YEAR AGO.
KOU-CHAN'S POWER.
FIGHT WITH FIRE FESTIVAL
喧嘩火付け祭り
喧嘩火付け祭り
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
CARRYIN' A SACRED PILLAR.

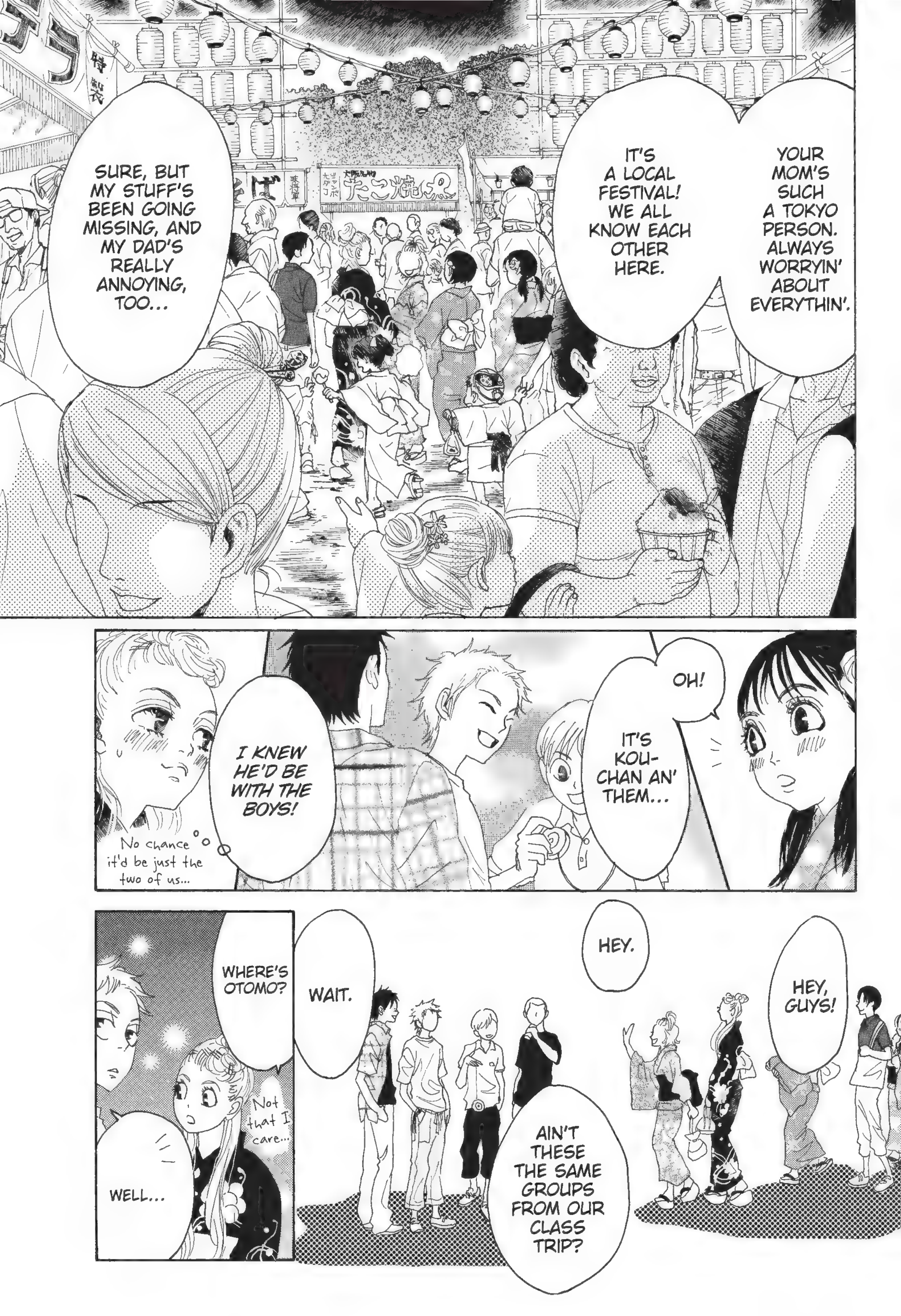

WHY AREN'T YOU SNEAKING IN THIS YEAR?
HM?
DON'T FEEL LIKE IT ANYMORE.
HMM...
...
YOU KNOW,
I KINDA WANT TO DO IT.
NOW THAT'S PLAIN CRAZY TALK.
YOU'LL GET FOUND OUT.
YOU THINK SO? I'M TALLER THAN YOU, THOUGH...
JUST THINK...
YOU HAVE YOUR OWN STAGE, DON'T YOU?
YOU'RE GONNA ROCK THAT MOVIE OF YOURS.

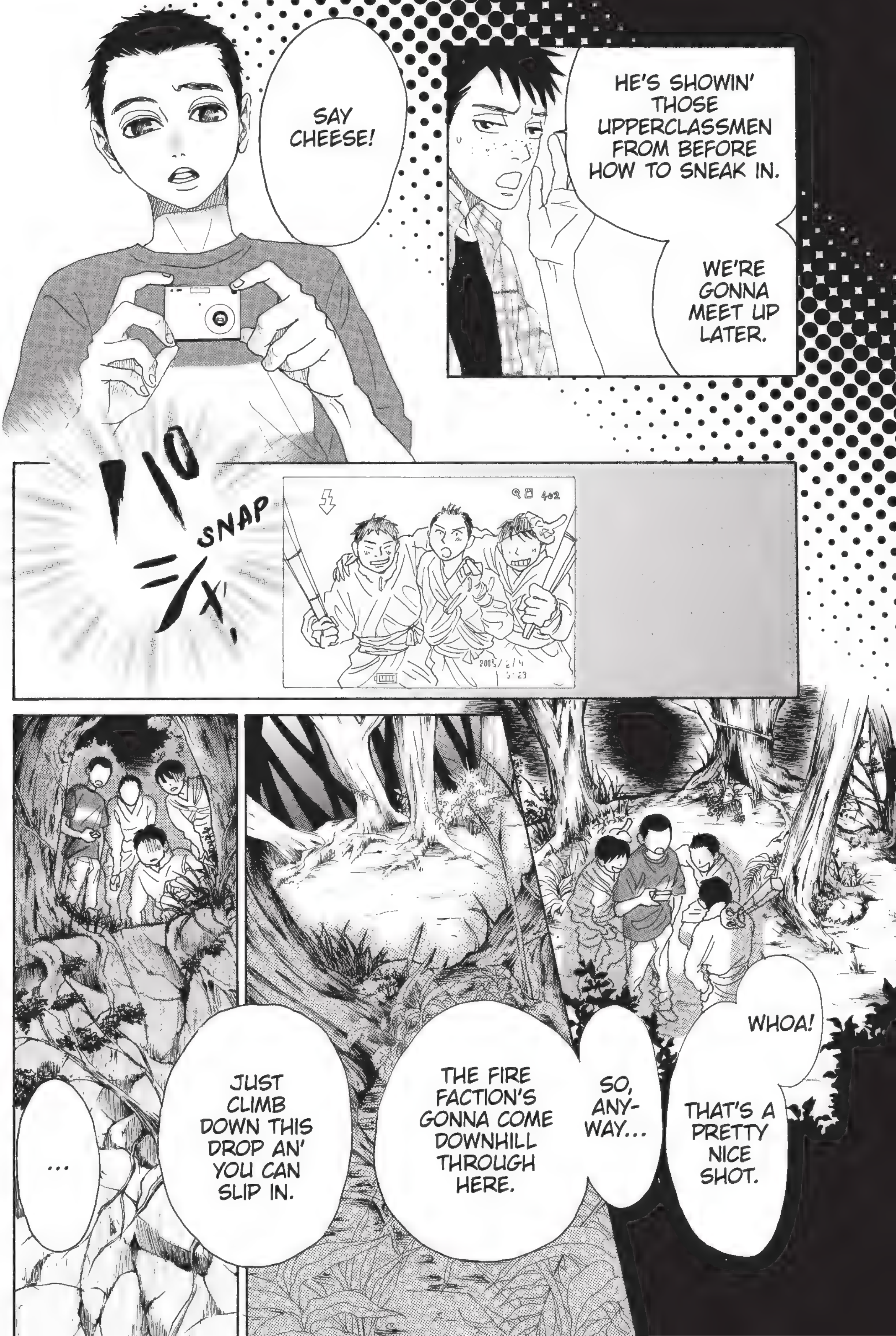

AH!
THAT'S TRUE.
I HAVE MY OWN POWER.
YEAH! I'LL KILL IT.
WATCH ME.
WATCH ME FROM MY SIDE.
AND I'LL WATCH YOU FROM YOURS.
KOU-CHAN…

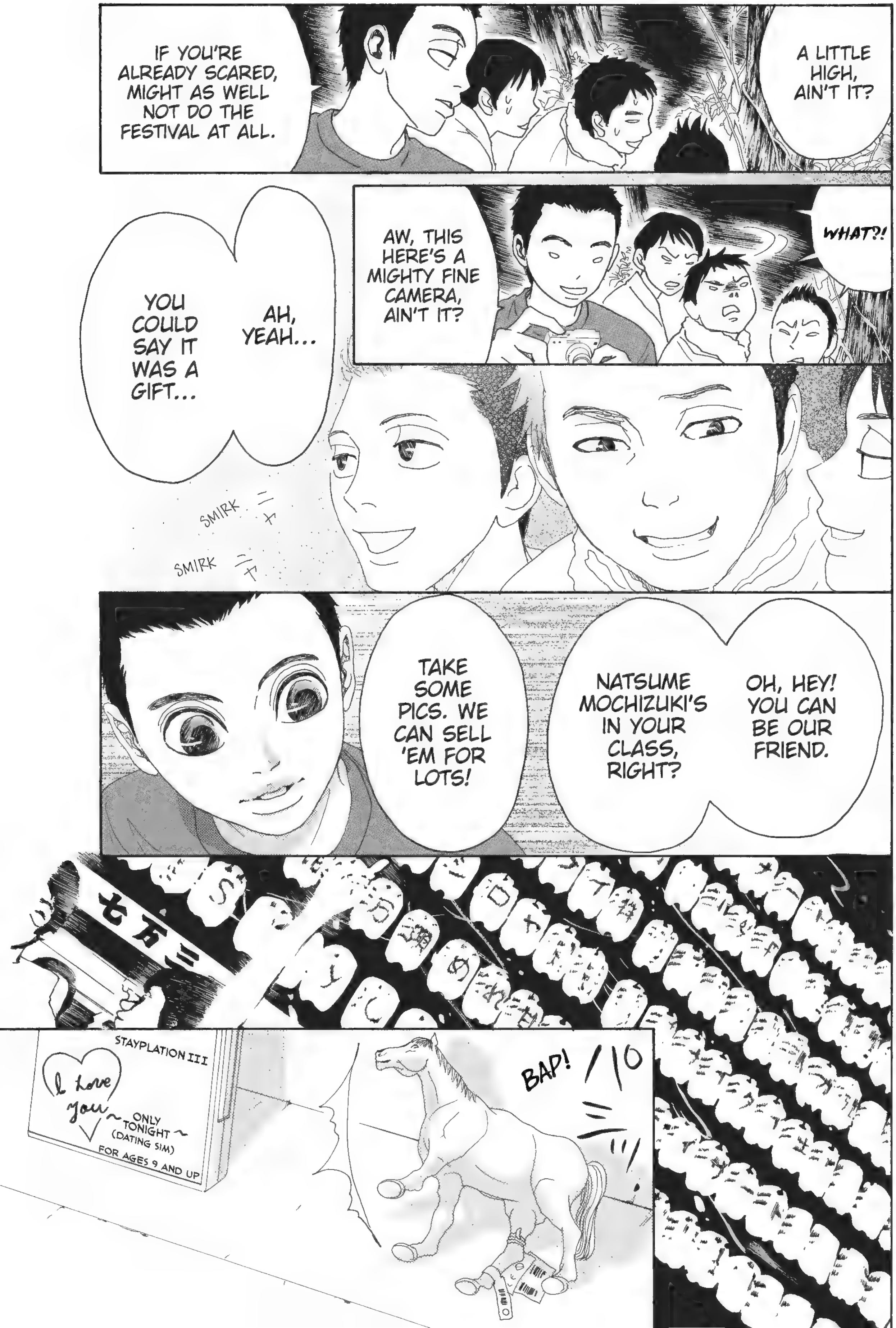

HE IS MY HOPE,
MY PRIDE,
MY LIGHT...
MY GOD...
SO...
...YOU SHOULD SHOW ME YOUR *TENGU* AGAIN!
YOU WERE SOOOO COOOOL LAST YEAR!
WHY SHOULD I?
NOW THAT YOU SAID THAT, I AIN'T NEVER DOIN' IT.
AWW...
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S OKAY.
MOM!
I REALLY NEED THAT *YUKATA*!
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN

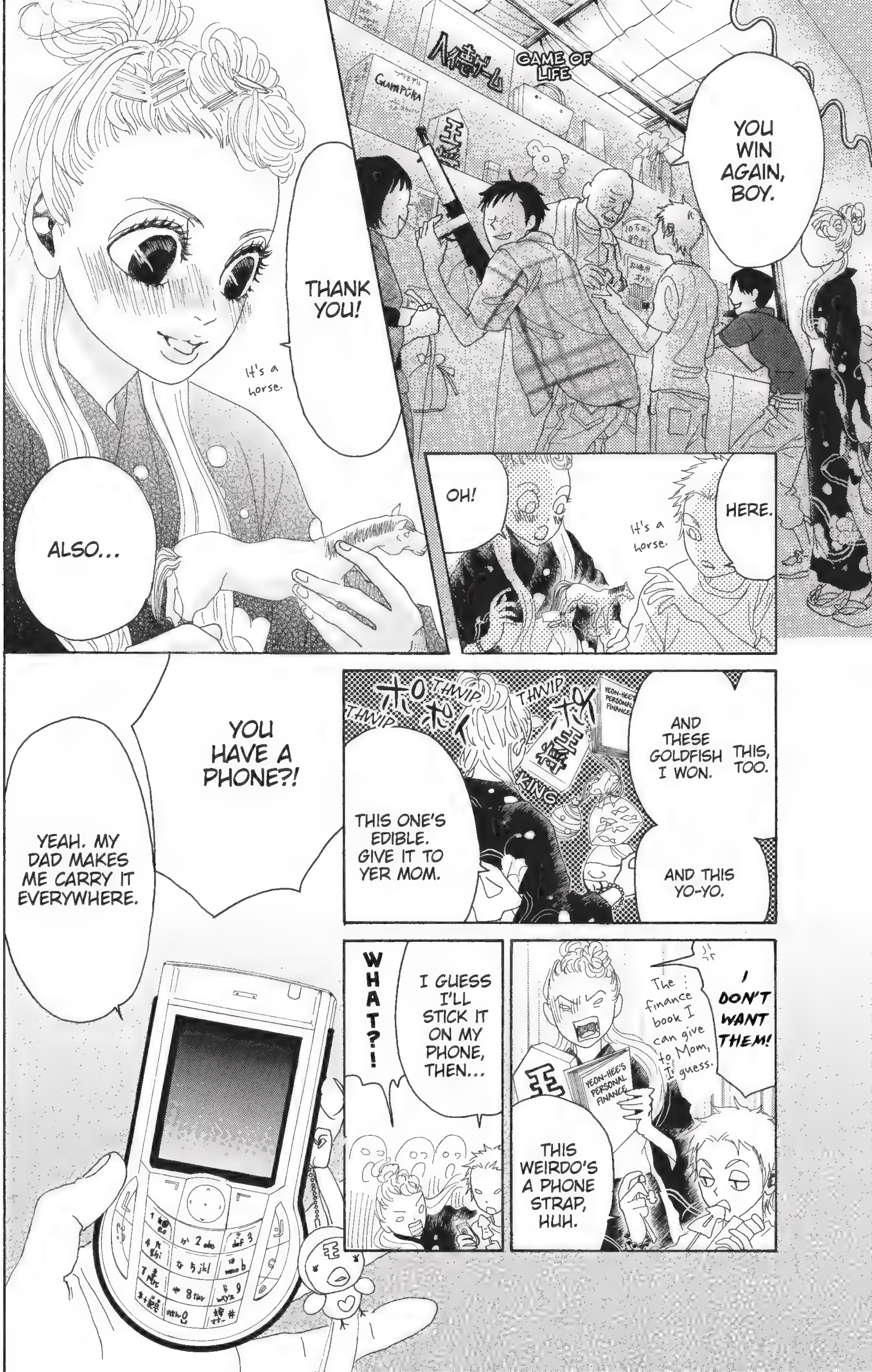

AH HA HA
あっははー
HINEMOSU INN
ひねもす屋
おっほほー
OH HO HO
OH, NATSUME!
WELCOME HOME.
MOM AND DAD ARE LAUGHING?
I can't believe it!
IS IT BECAUSE OF THIS GUEST?
COME ON, NATSUME!
DON'T COME THROUGH THE INN! YOU'LL ATTRACT WEIRDOS! IT'S BAD FOR BUSINESS!
IT MUST BE TOUGH BEING AN IDOL, EH, NATSUME-CHAN?
IT'S... FINE...
An idol?
THIS GUEST WAS JUST TELLING US...
APPARENTLY, HE'S A GRADUATE STUDENT STUDYING FOLKLORE.

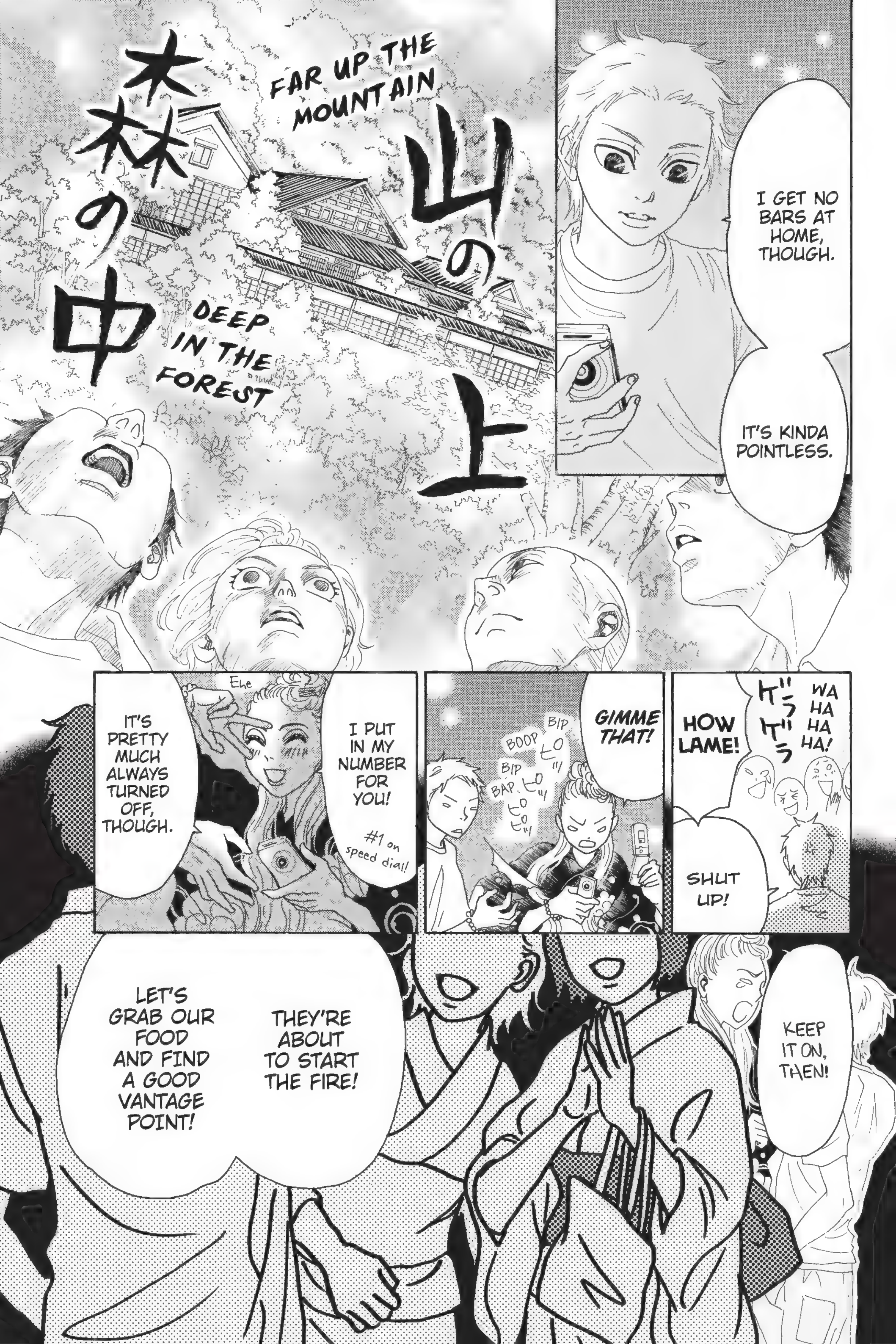

HE CAME TO EXPERIENCE THE FIRE FESTIVAL!
A GRADUATE STUDENT? LIKE, IN COLLEGE?
IT'S A HUGE HELP HAVING YOUR FATHER AND RYUTA-KUN TO SHOW ME AROUND!
I'VE GOT IT! WHY NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE FESTIVAL IN MY PLACE?
WITH THAT MASK, NOBODY WILL BE ABLE TO TELL!
OH, NO! THAT WOULD BE TOO DANGEROUS FOR HIM! REMEMBER HOW YOU BROKE A BONE LAST YEAR?
I DON'T WANT TO RUIN THE MOOD... I'LL JUST ASK ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL.
ははは AH HA HA
おほほ OH HO HO
I'M HEADING OUT NOW!
YOUR CURFEW IS 10:00 PM!
STAY WITH YOUR GROUP!
NO PHOTOS UNLESS THEY CONTACT YOUR MANAGER FIRST!
GOT IT?
You're an idol, after all!

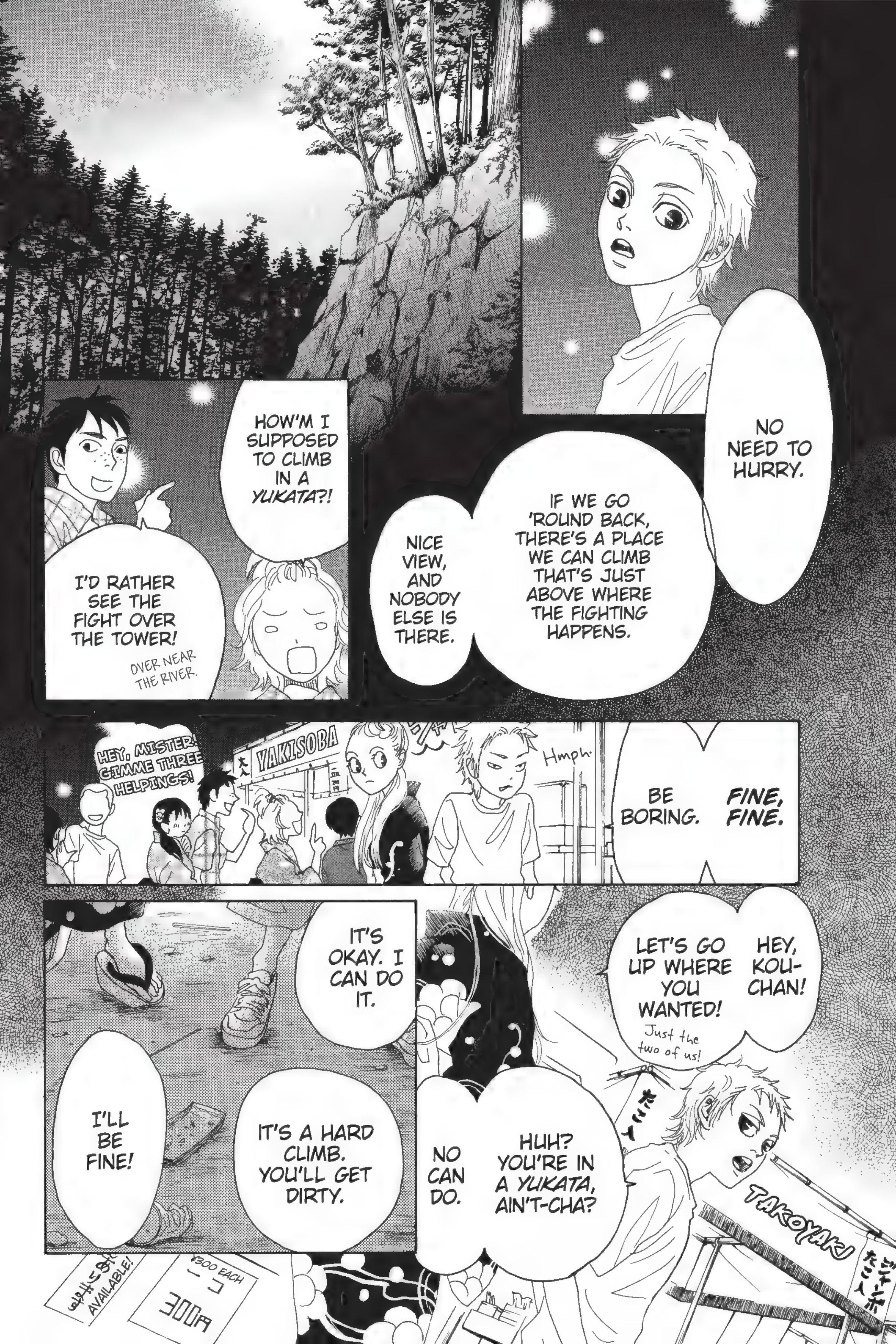

YOUR MOM'S SUCH A TOKYO PERSON. ALWAYS WORRYIN' ABOUT EVERYTHIN'.
IT'S A LOCAL FESTIVAL! WE ALL KNOW EACH OTHER HERE.
SURE, BUT MY STUFF'S BEEN GOING MISSING, AND MY DAD'S REALLY ANNOYING, TOO...
OH!
IT'S KOU-CHAN AN' THEM...
I KNEW HE'D BE WITH THE BOYS!
No chance it'd be just the two of us...
HEY, GUYS!
HEY.
AIN'T THESE THE SAME GROUPS FROM OUR CLASS TRIP?
WAIT.
WHERE'S OTOMO?
Not that I care...
WELL...

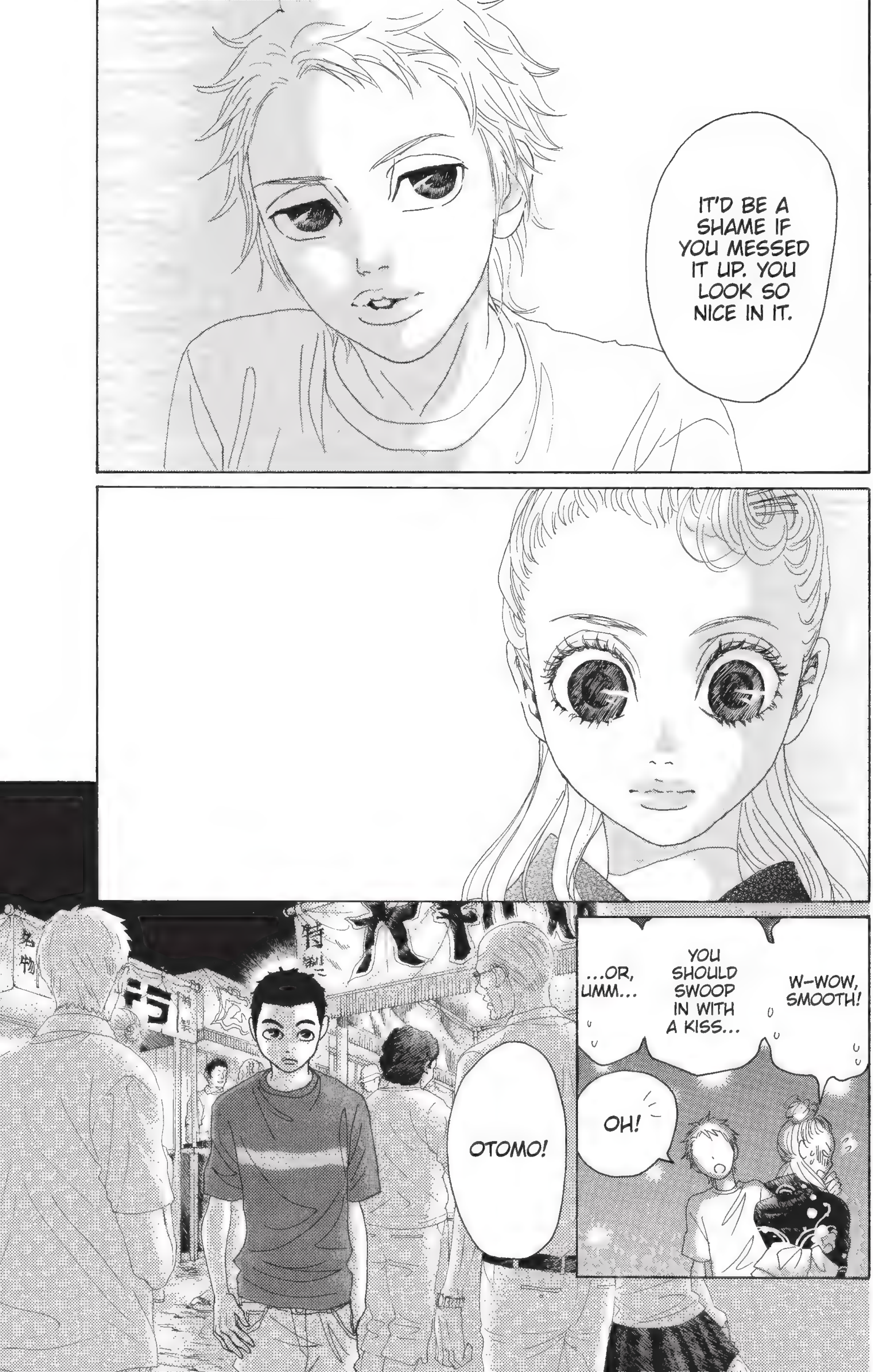

HE'S SHOWIN' THOSE UPPERCLASSMEN FROM BEFORE HOW TO SNEAK IN.
WE'RE GONNA MEET UP LATER.
SAY CHEESE!
SNAP
WHOA!
THAT'S A PRETTY NICE SHOT.
SO, ANYWAY...
THE FIRE FACTION'S GONNA COME DOWNHILL THROUGH HERE.
JUST CLIMB DOWN THIS DROP AN' YOU CAN SLIP IN.
...

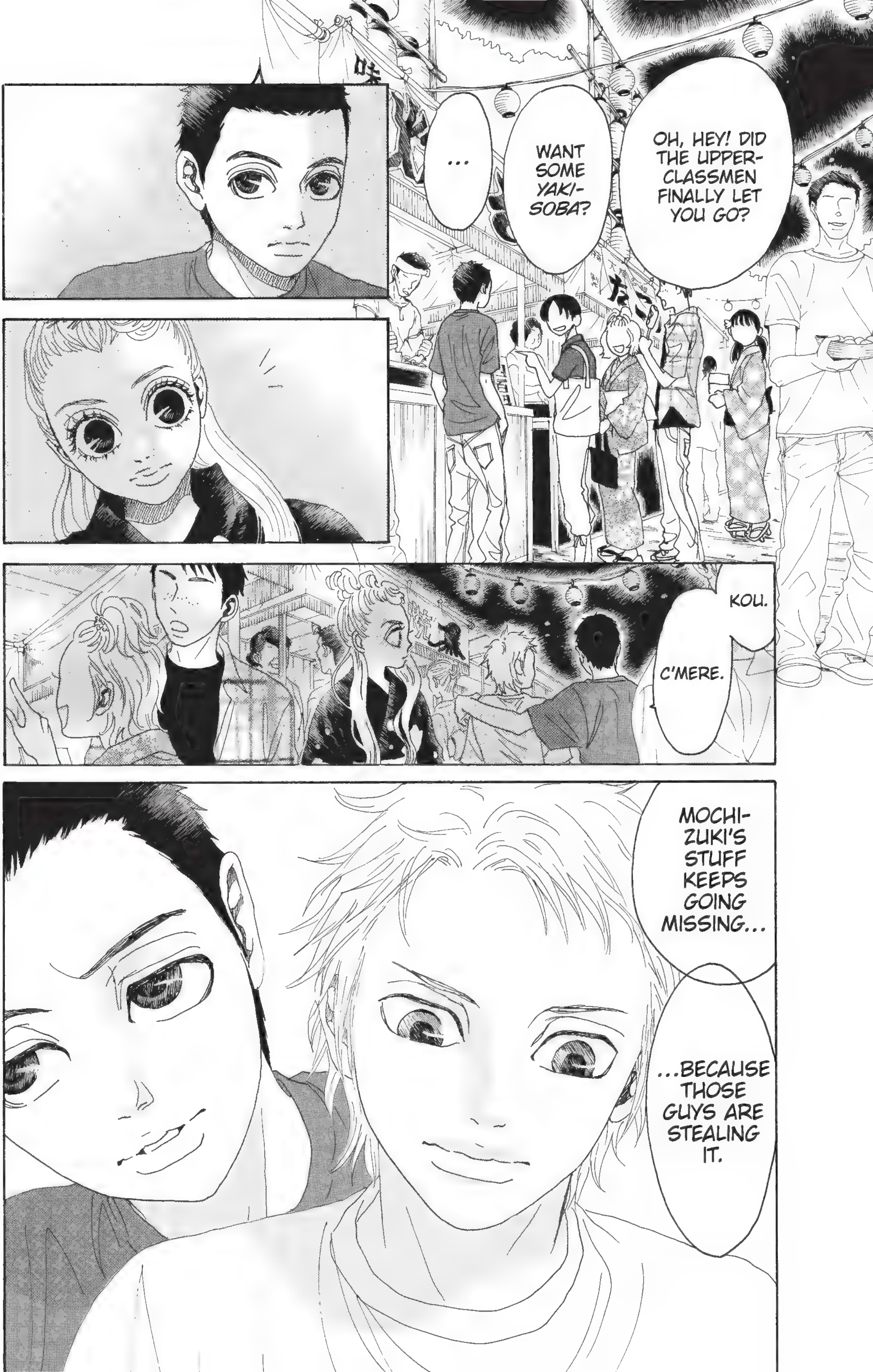

A LITTLE HIGH, AIN'T IT?
IF YOU'RE ALREADY SCARED, MIGHT AS WELL NOT DO THE FESTIVAL AT ALL.
WHAT?!
AW, THIS HERE'S A MIGHTY FINE CAMERA, AIN'T IT?
AH, YEAH...
YOU COULD SAY IT WAS A GIFT...
SMIRK ニャ
SMIRK ニャ
OH, HEY! YOU CAN BE OUR FRIEND.
NATSUME MOCHIZUKI'S IN YOUR CLASS, RIGHT?
TAKE SOME PICS. WE CAN SELL 'EM FOR LOTS!
七万三
BAP!
STAYPLATION III
I love you ~ ONLY TONIGHT ~ (DATING SIM)
FOR AGES 9 AND UP

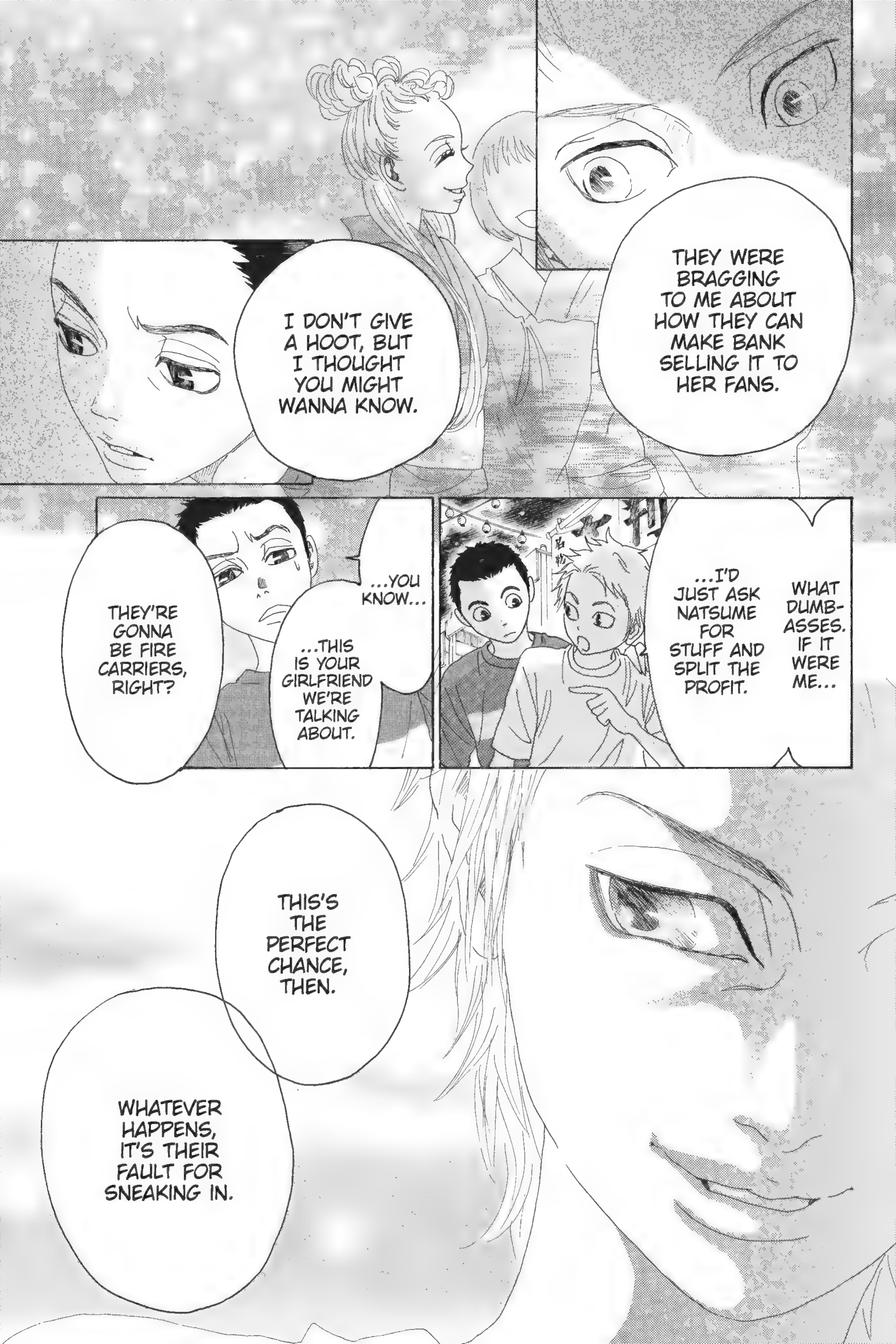

GAME OF LIFE
YOU WIN AGAIN, BOY.
HERE.
It's a horse.
OH!
THANK YOU!
It's a horse.
ALSO...
YEON-HEE'S PERSONAL FINANCE
THIS, TOO.
AND THESE GOLDFISH I WON.
AND THIS YO-YO.
THWIP
THWIP
THWIP
KING
THIS ONE'S EDIBLE. GIVE IT TO YER MOM.
I DON'T WANT THEM!
The finance book I can give to Mom, I guess.
YEON-HEE'S PERSONAL FINANCE
THIS WEIRDO'S A PHONE STRAP, HUH.
I GUESS I'LL STICK IT ON MY PHONE, THEN...
WHAT?!
YOU HAVE A PHONE?!
YEAH. MY DAD MAKES ME CARRY IT EVERYWHERE.

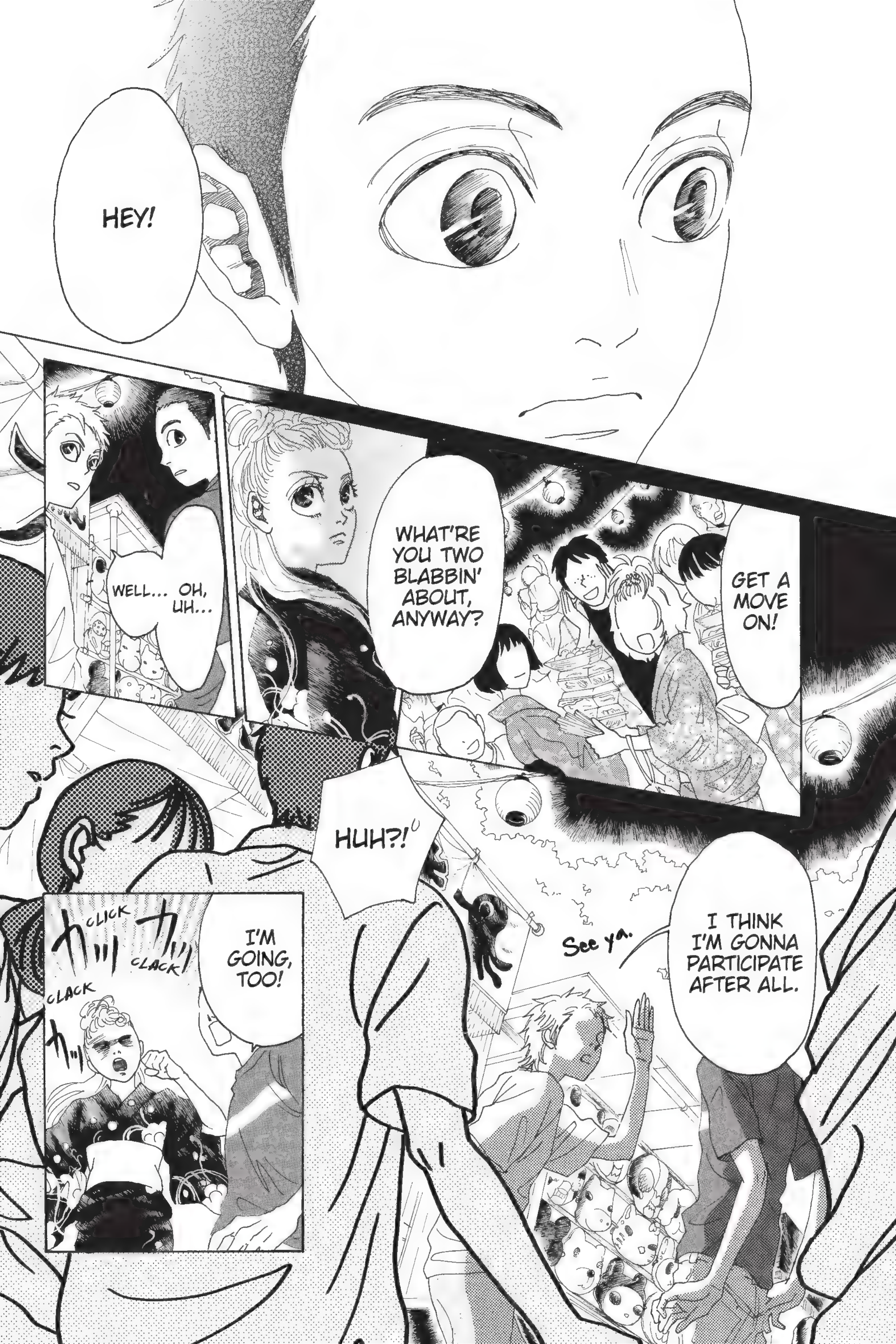

I GET NO BARS AT HOME, THOUGH.
IT'S KINDA POINTLESS.
山の上
FAR UP THE MOUNTAIN
森の中
DEEP IN THE FOREST
ゲラゲラ
WA HA HA HA!
HOW LAME!
SHUT UP!
GIMME THAT!
BIP ピッ
BOOP ピッ
BIP BAP ピッ ピッ
I PUT IN MY NUMBER FOR YOU!
#1 on speed dial!
Ehe
IT'S PRETTY MUCH ALWAYS TURNED OFF, THOUGH.
KEEP IT ON, THEN!
THEY'RE ABOUT TO START THE FIRE!
LET'S GRAB OUR FOOD AND FIND A GOOD VANTAGE POINT!

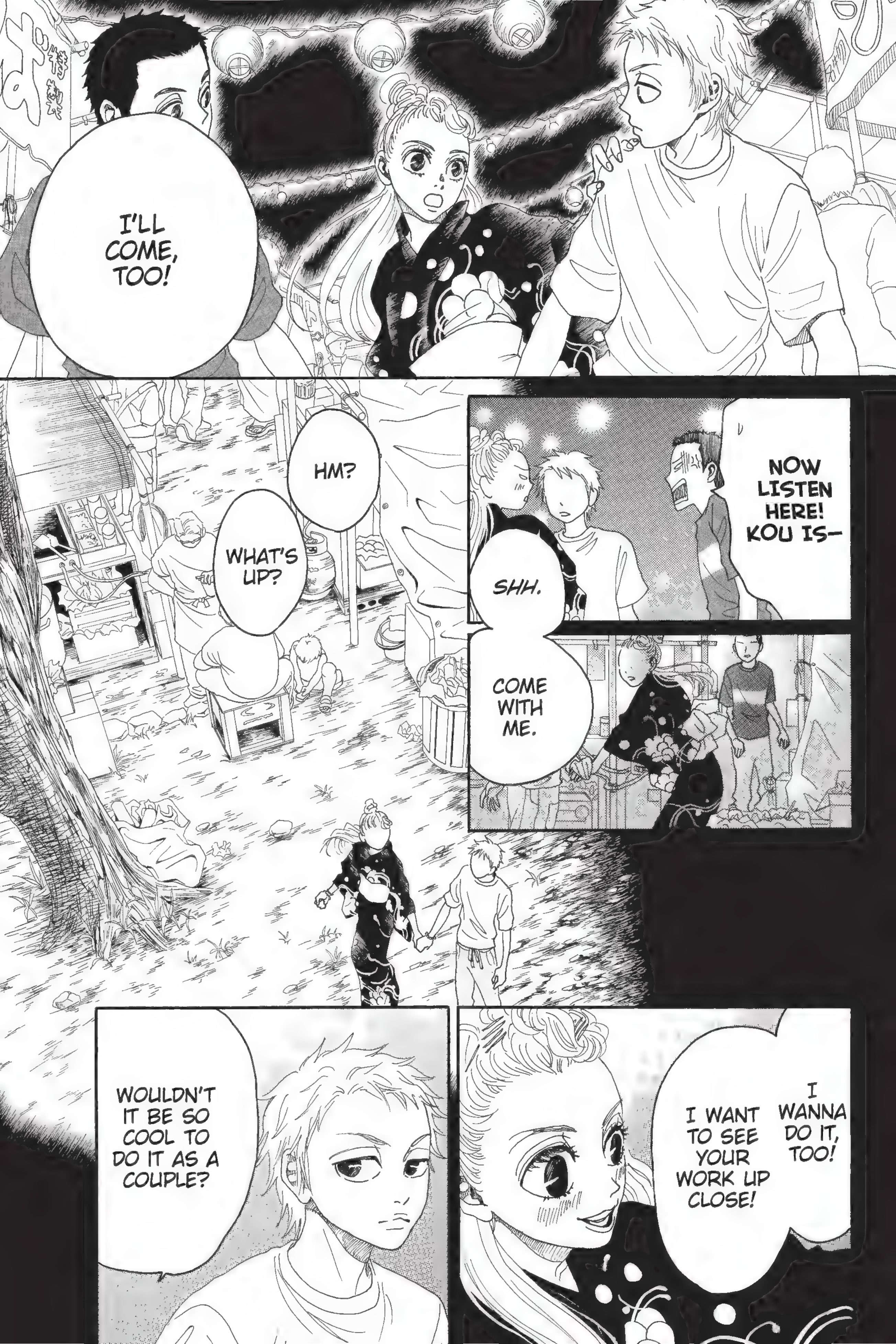

NO NEED TO HURRY.
IF WE GO 'ROUND BACK, THERE'S A PLACE WE CAN CLIMB THAT'S JUST ABOVE WHERE THE FIGHTING HAPPENS.
NICE VIEW, AND NOBODY ELSE IS THERE.
HOW'M I SUPPOSED TO CLIMB IN A *YUKATA*?!
I'D RATHER SEE THE FIGHT OVER THE TOWER!
OVER NEAR THE RIVER.
FINE, FINE.
BE BORING.
Hmph.
YAKISOBA
HEY, MISTER! GIMME THREE HELPINGS!
HEY, KOU-CHAN!
LET'S GO UP WHERE YOU WANTED!
Just the two of us!
HUH? YOU'RE IN A *YUKATA*, AIN'T-CHA?
NO CAN DO.
TAKOYAKI
IT'S OKAY. I CAN DO IT.
IT'S A HARD CLIMB. YOU'LL GET DIRTY.
I'LL BE FINE!
¥300 EACH
300円
AVAILABLE!

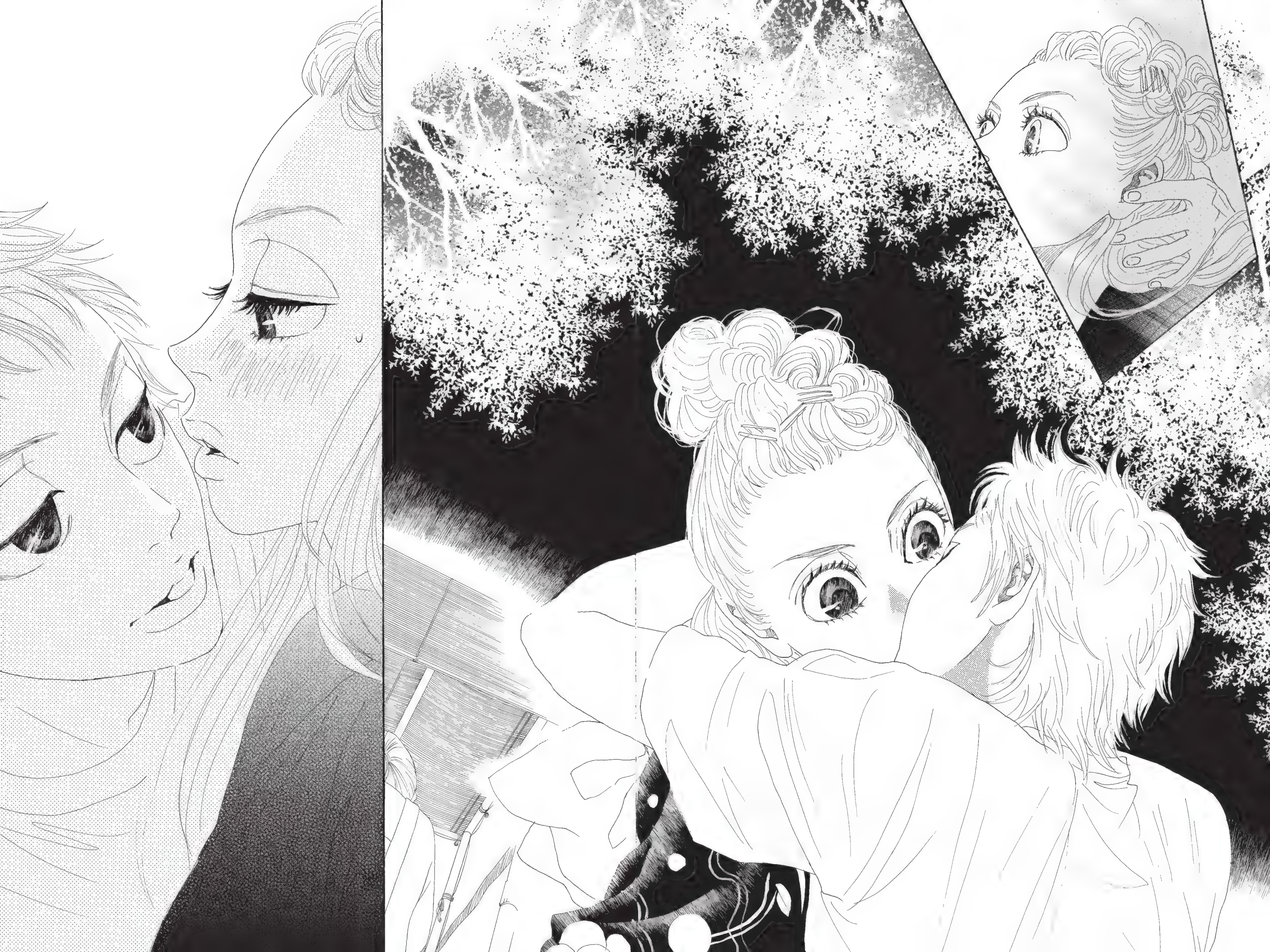

IT'D BE A SHAME IF YOU MESSED IT UP. YOU LOOK SO NICE IN IT.
W-WOW, SMOOTH!
YOU SHOULD SWOOP IN WITH A KISS...
...OR, UMM...
OH!
OTOMO!

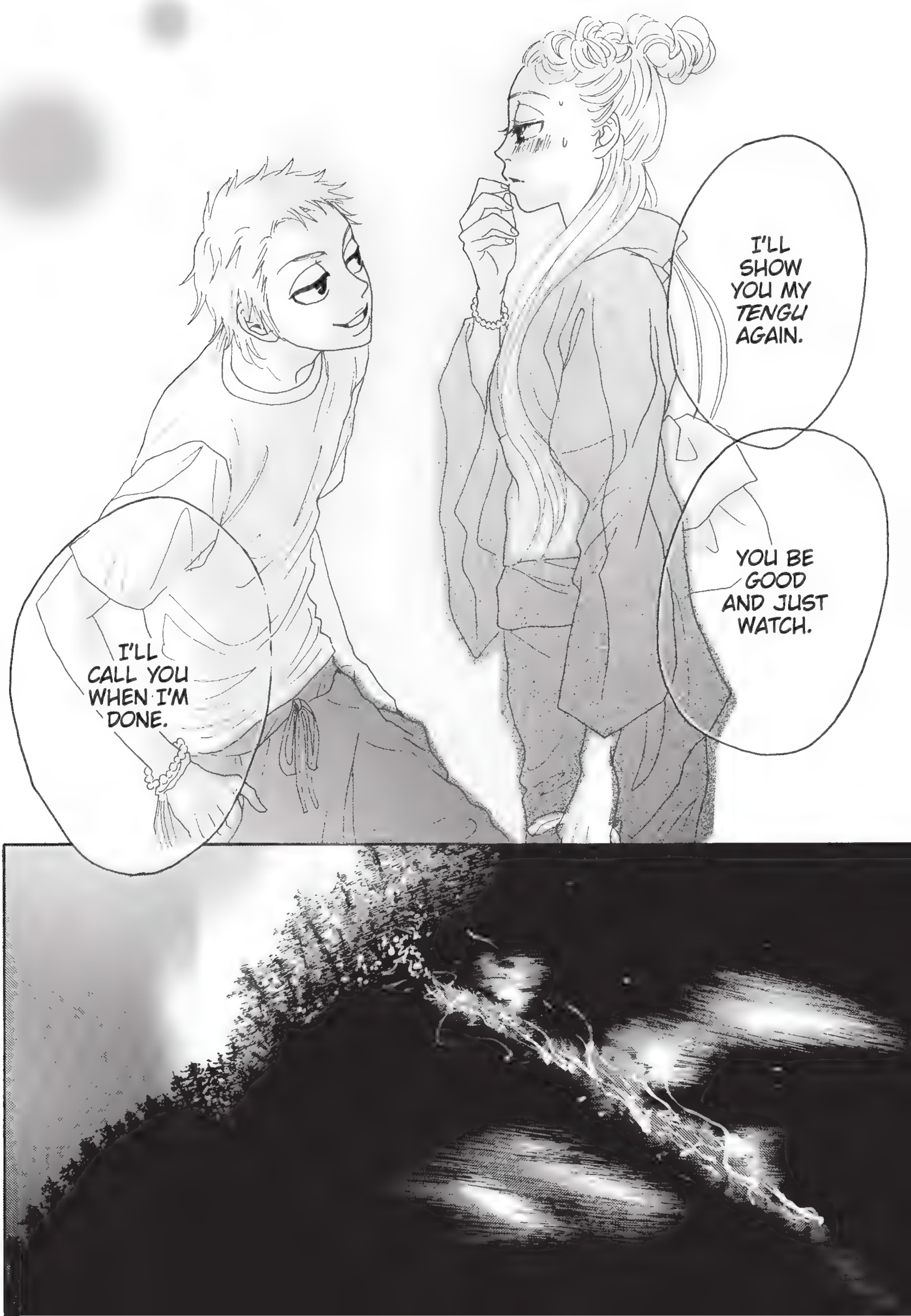

OH, HEY! DID THE UPPERCLASSMEN FINALLY LET YOU GO?
WANT SOME *YAKISOBA*?
...
KOU.
C'MERE.
MOCHIZUKI'S STUFF KEEPS GOING MISSING...
...BECAUSE THOSE GUYS ARE STEALING IT.

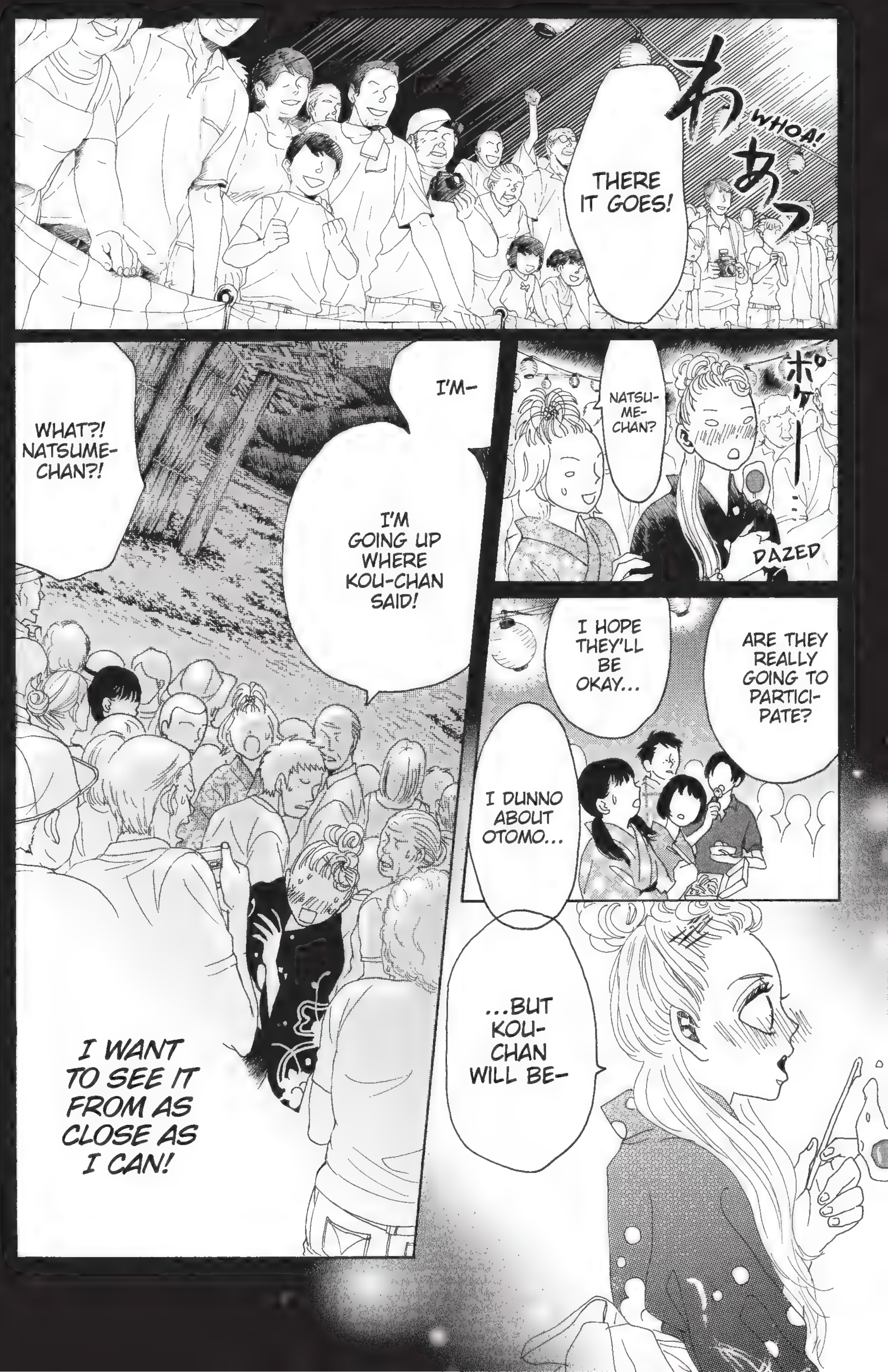

THEY WERE BRAGGING TO ME ABOUT HOW THEY CAN MAKE BANK SELLING IT TO HER FANS.
I DON'T GIVE A HOOT, BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANNA KNOW.
WHAT DUMBASSES. IF IT WERE ME...
...I'D JUST ASK NATSUME FOR STUFF AND SPLIT THE PROFIT.
...YOU KNOW...
...THIS IS YOUR GIRLFRIEND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.
THEY'RE GONNA BE FIRE CARRIERS, RIGHT?
THIS'S THE PERFECT CHANCE, THEN.
WHATEVER HAPPENS, IT'S THEIR FAULT FOR SNEAKING IN.

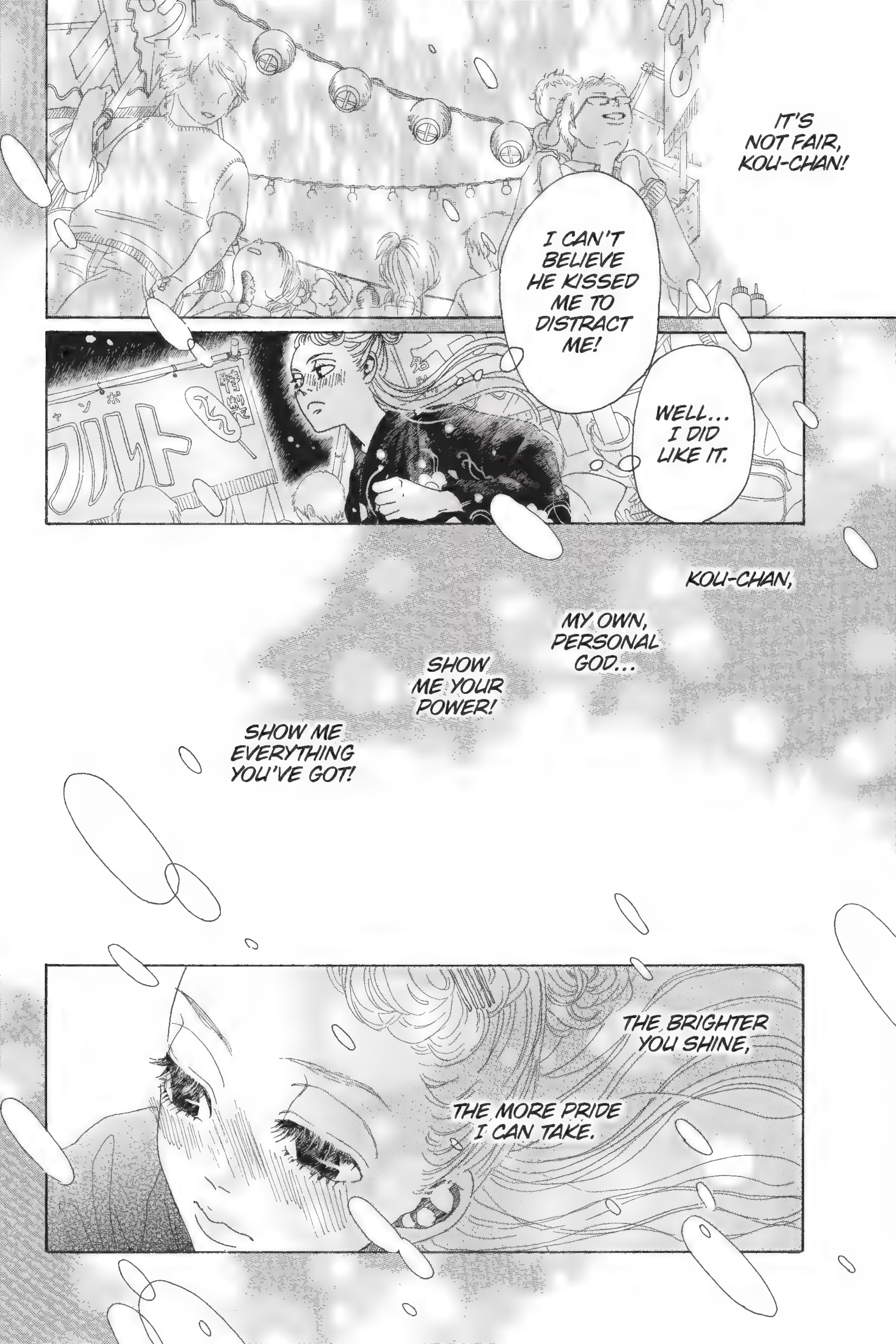

HEY!
GET A MOVE ON!
WHAT'RE YOU TWO BLABBIN' ABOUT, ANYWAY?
WELL... OH, UH...
HUH?!
I THINK I'M GONNA PARTICIPATE AFTER ALL.
See ya.
I'M GOING, TOO!
カッ CLICK
カッ CLACK
カッ CLACK

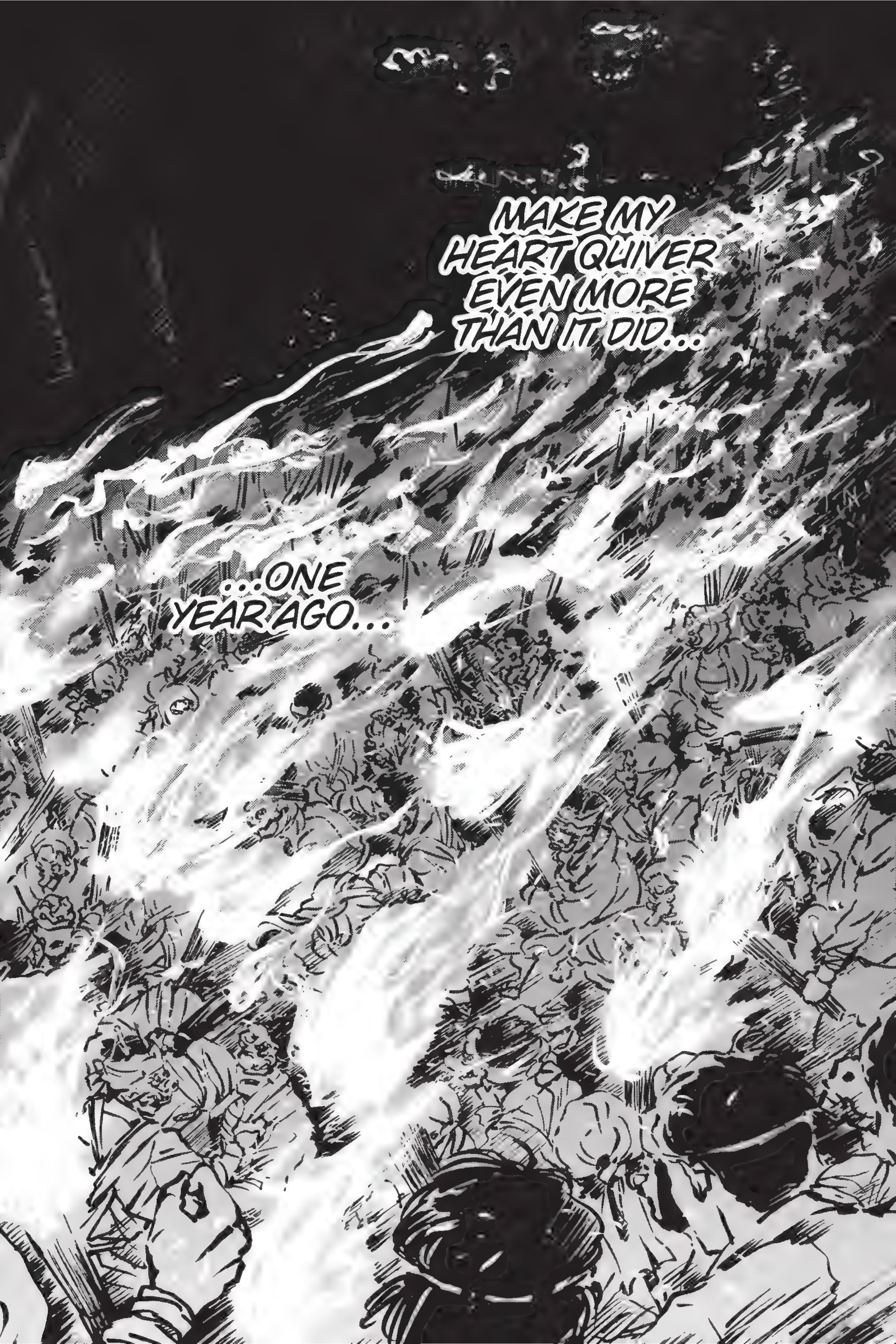

I'LL COME, TOO!
NOW LISTEN HERE! KOU IS—
SHH.
COME WITH ME.
HM?
WHAT'S UP?
I WANNA DO IT, TOO!
I WANT TO SEE YOUR WORK UP CLOSE!
WOULDN'T IT BE SO COOL TO DO IT AS A COUPLE?

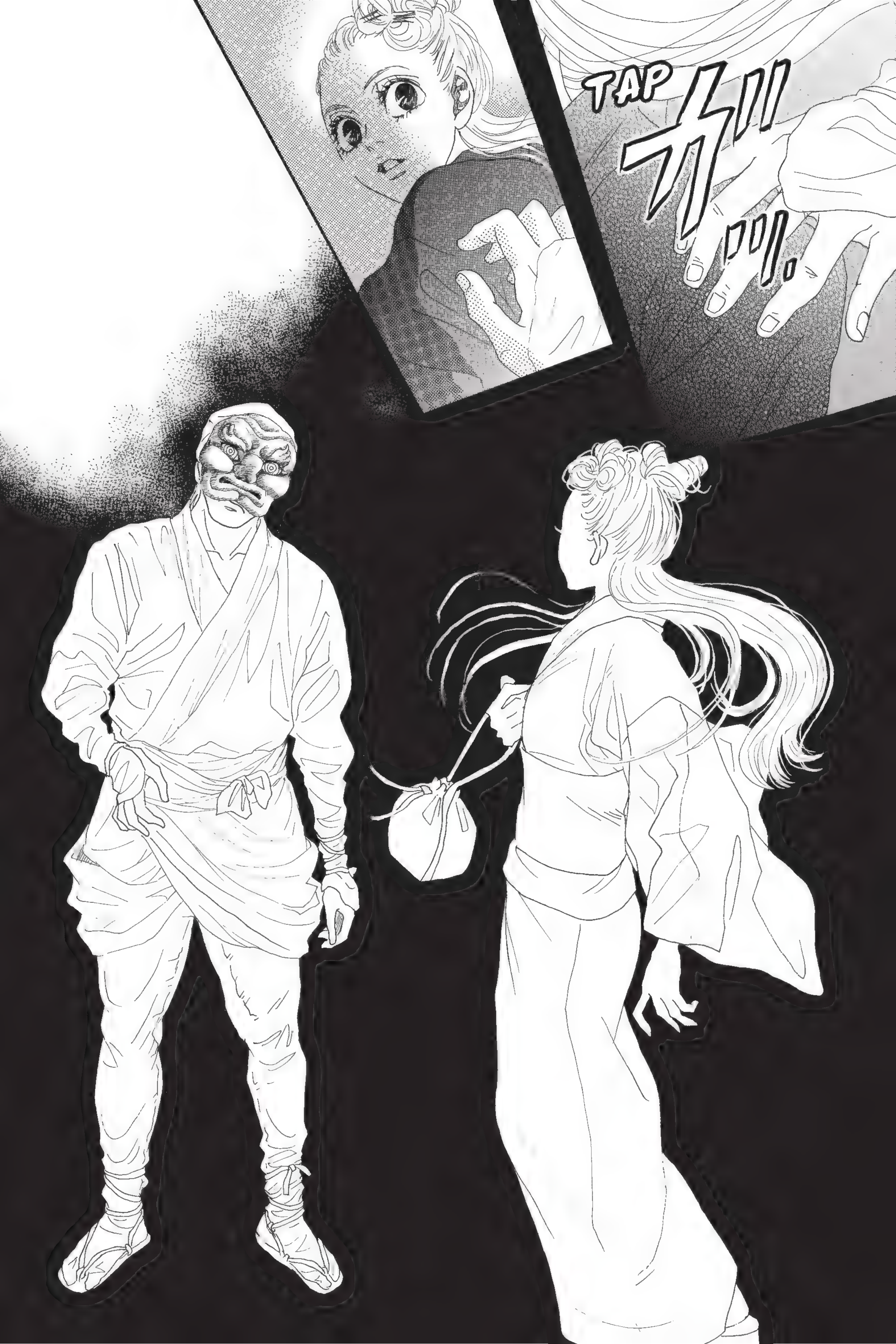


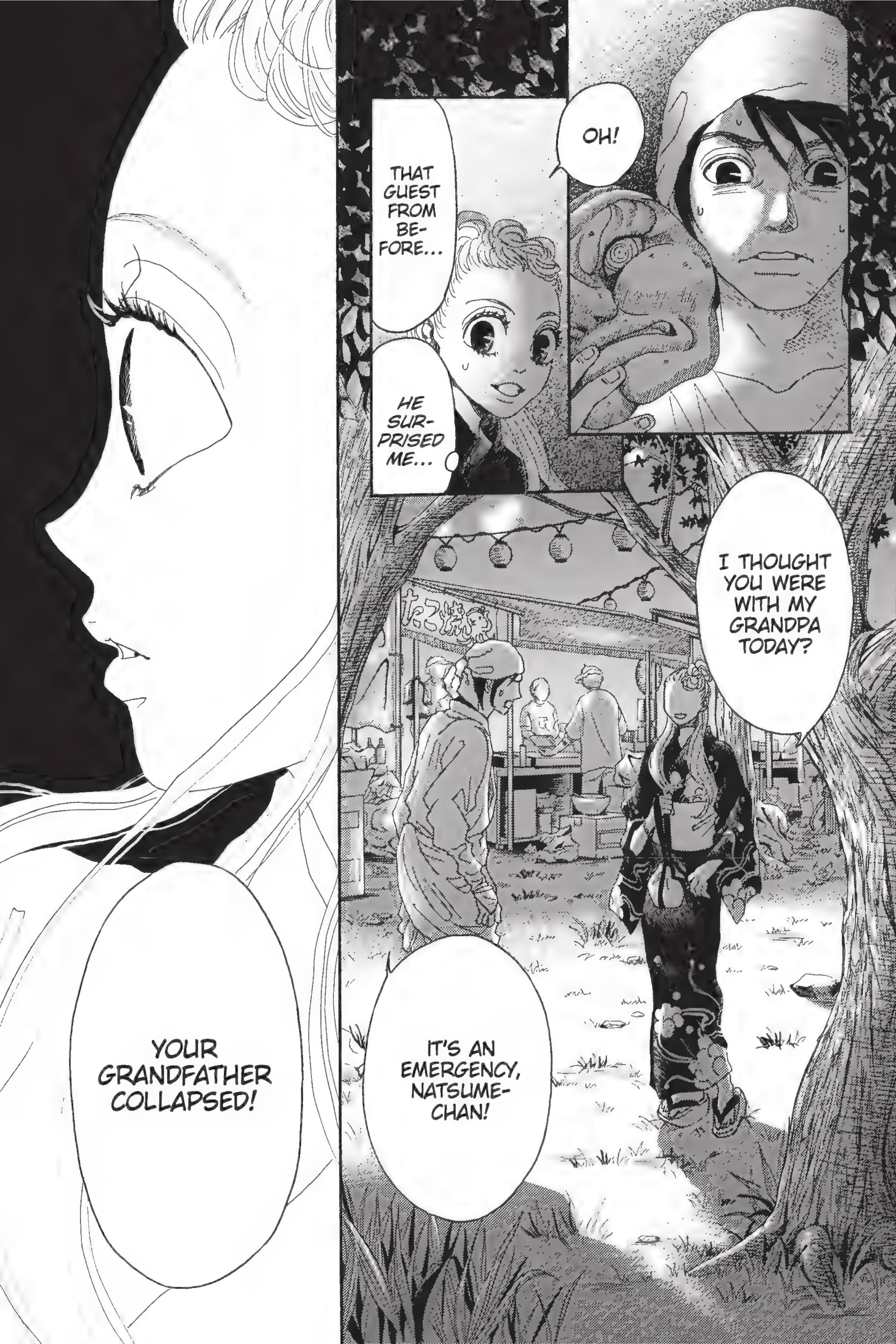

I'LL SHOW YOU MY *TENGU* AGAIN.
YOU BE GOOD AND JUST WATCH.
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M DONE.

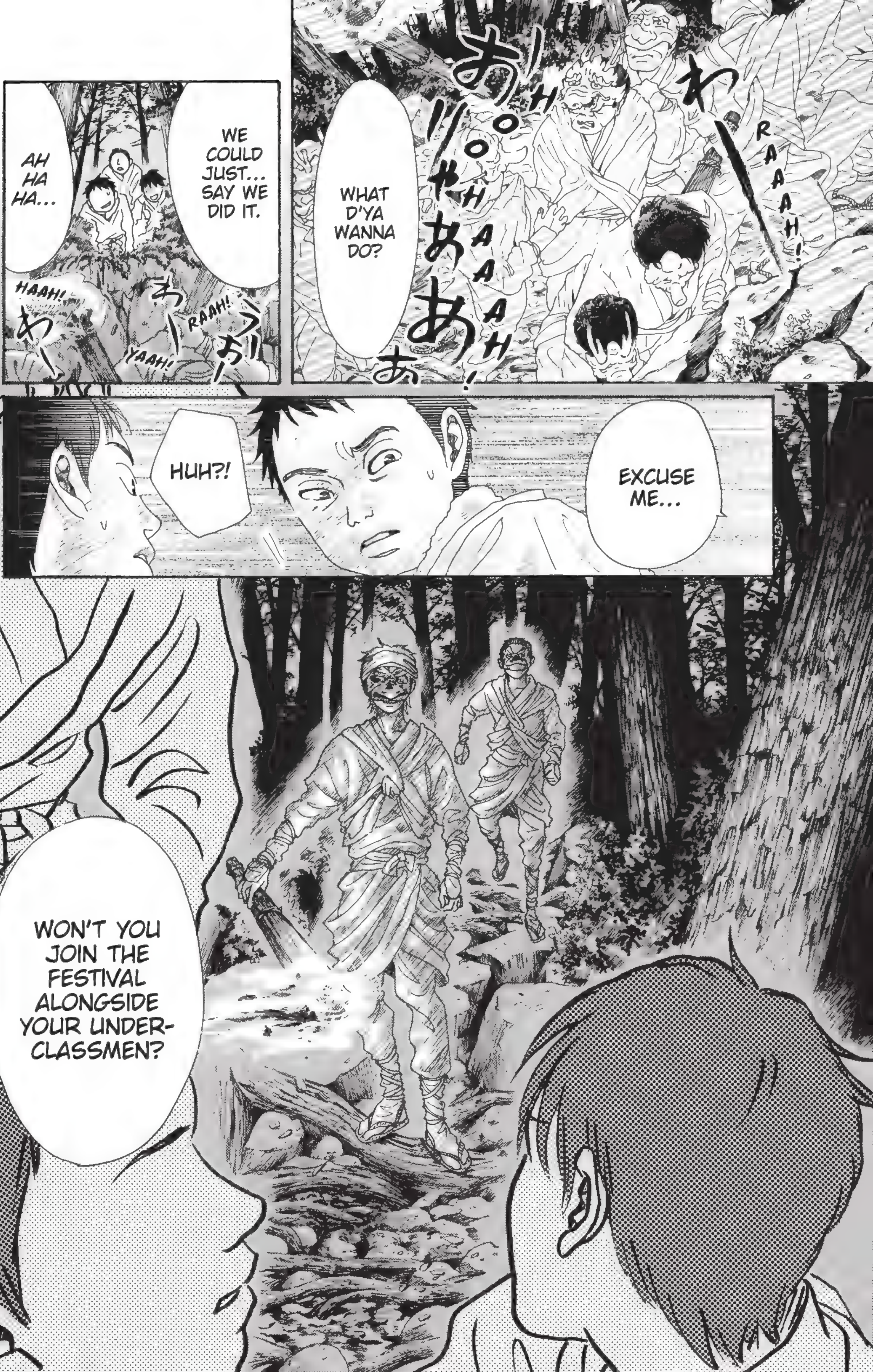

わあっ
WHOA!
THERE IT GOES!
NATSU-ME-CHAN?
ポケー…
DAZED
WHAT?! NATSUME-CHAN?!
I'M-
I'M GOING UP WHERE KOU-CHAN SAID!
I WANT TO SEE IT FROM AS CLOSE AS I CAN!
ARE THEY REALLY GOING TO PARTICIPATE?
I HOPE THEY'LL BE OKAY…
I DUNNO ABOUT OTOMO…
…BUT KOU-CHAN WILL BE-

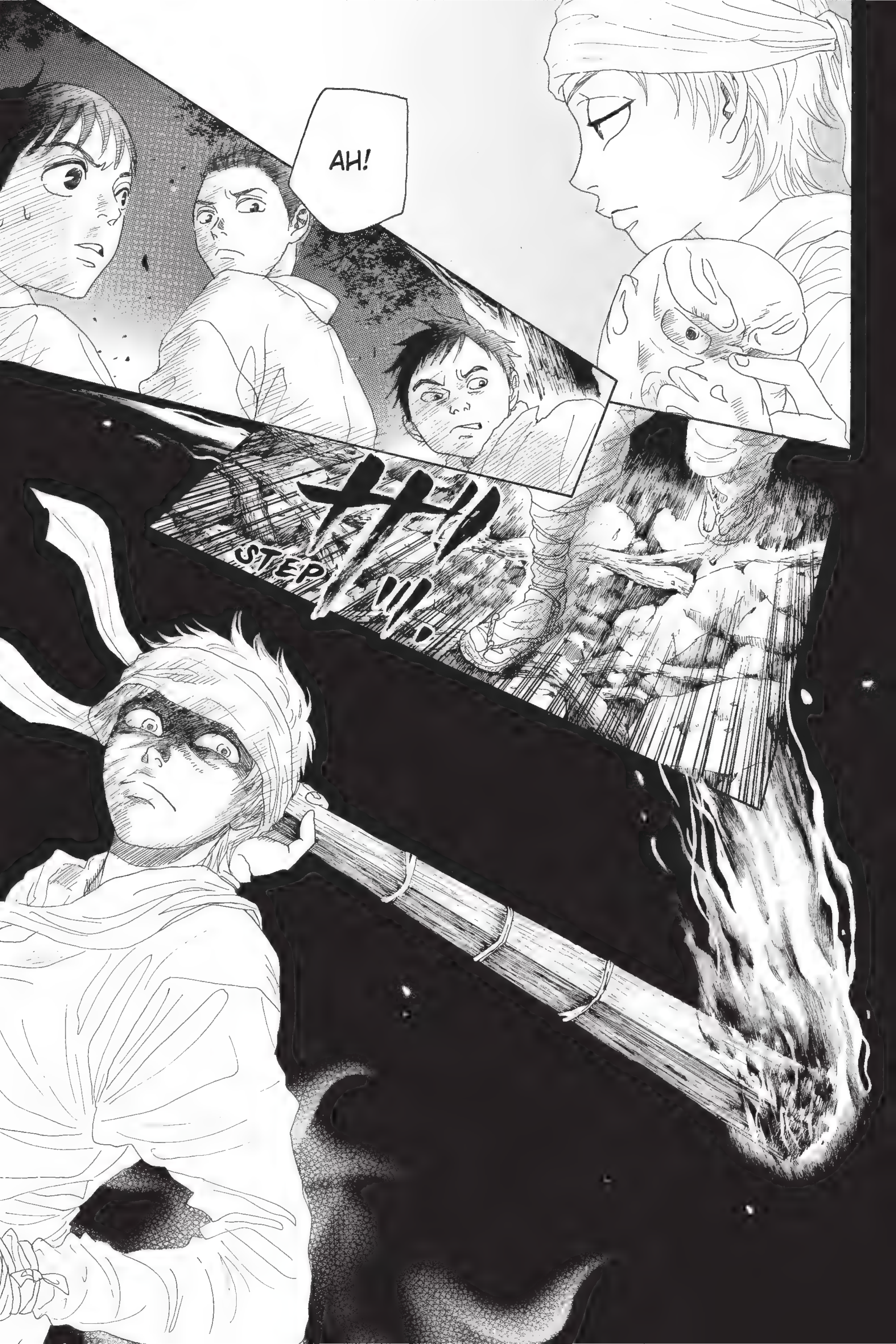

IT'S NOT FAIR, KOU-CHAN!
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE KISSED ME TO DISTRACT ME!
WELL... I DID LIKE IT.
KOU-CHAN,
MY OWN, PERSONAL GOD...
SHOW ME YOUR POWER!
SHOW ME EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT!
THE BRIGHTER YOU SHINE,
THE MORE PRIDE I CAN TAKE.

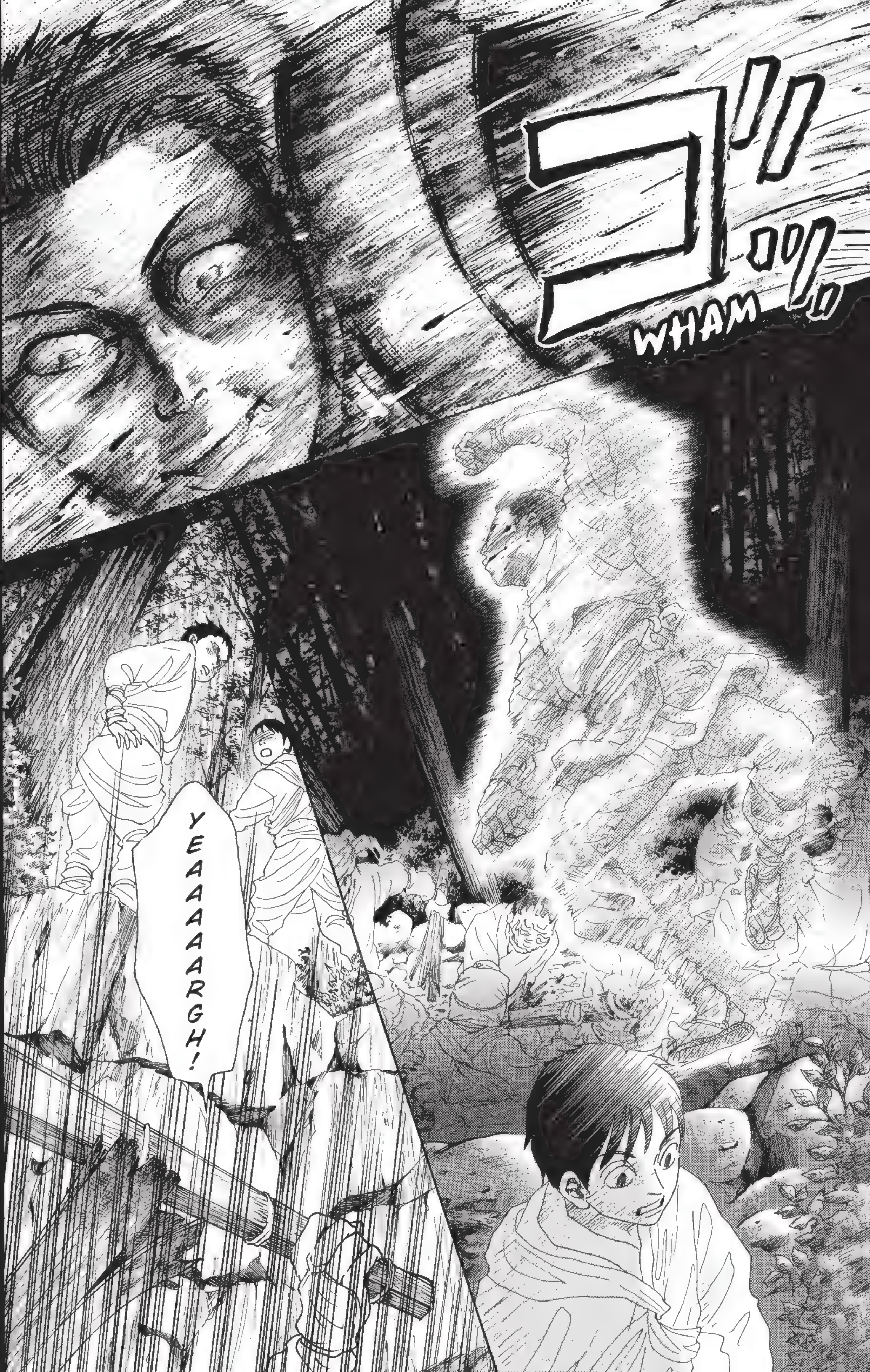

MAKE MY HEART QUIVER EVEN MORE THAN IT DID...
...ONE YEAR AGO...

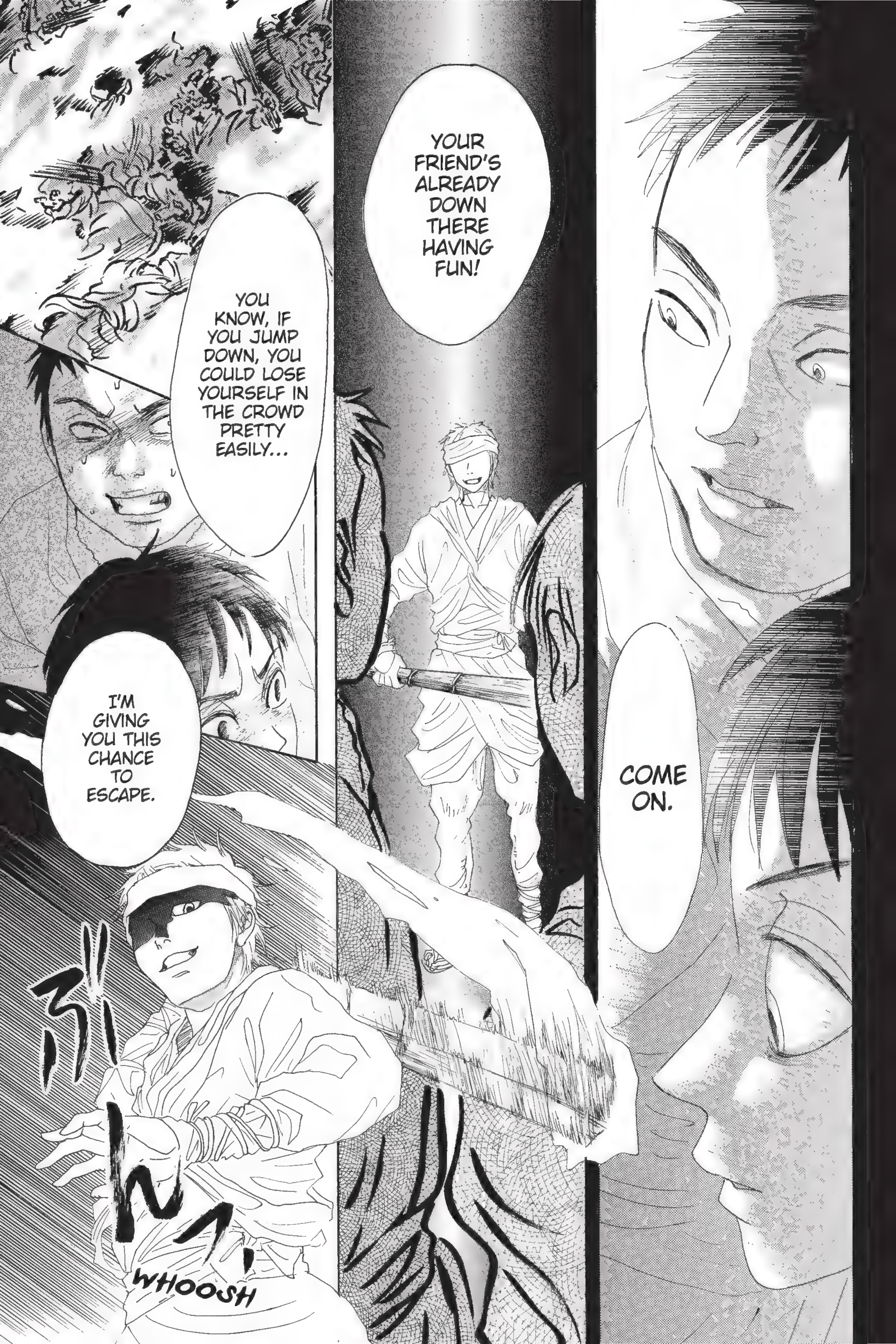

TAP
ガッ!

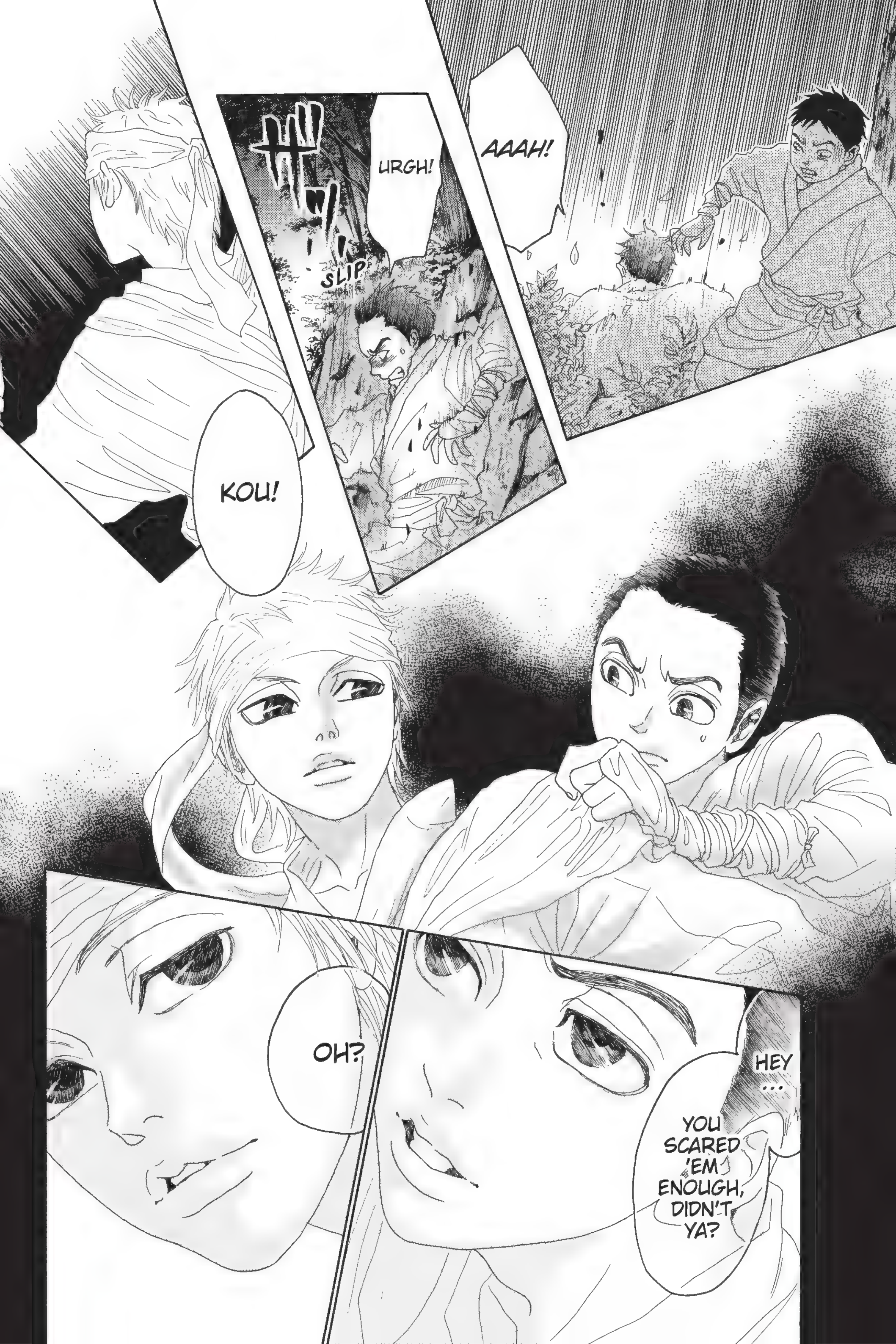

OH!
THAT GUEST FROM BEFORE...
HE SURPRISED ME...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE WITH MY GRANDPA TODAY?
IT'S AN EMERGENCY, NATSUME-CHAN!
YOUR GRANDFATHER COLLAPSED!

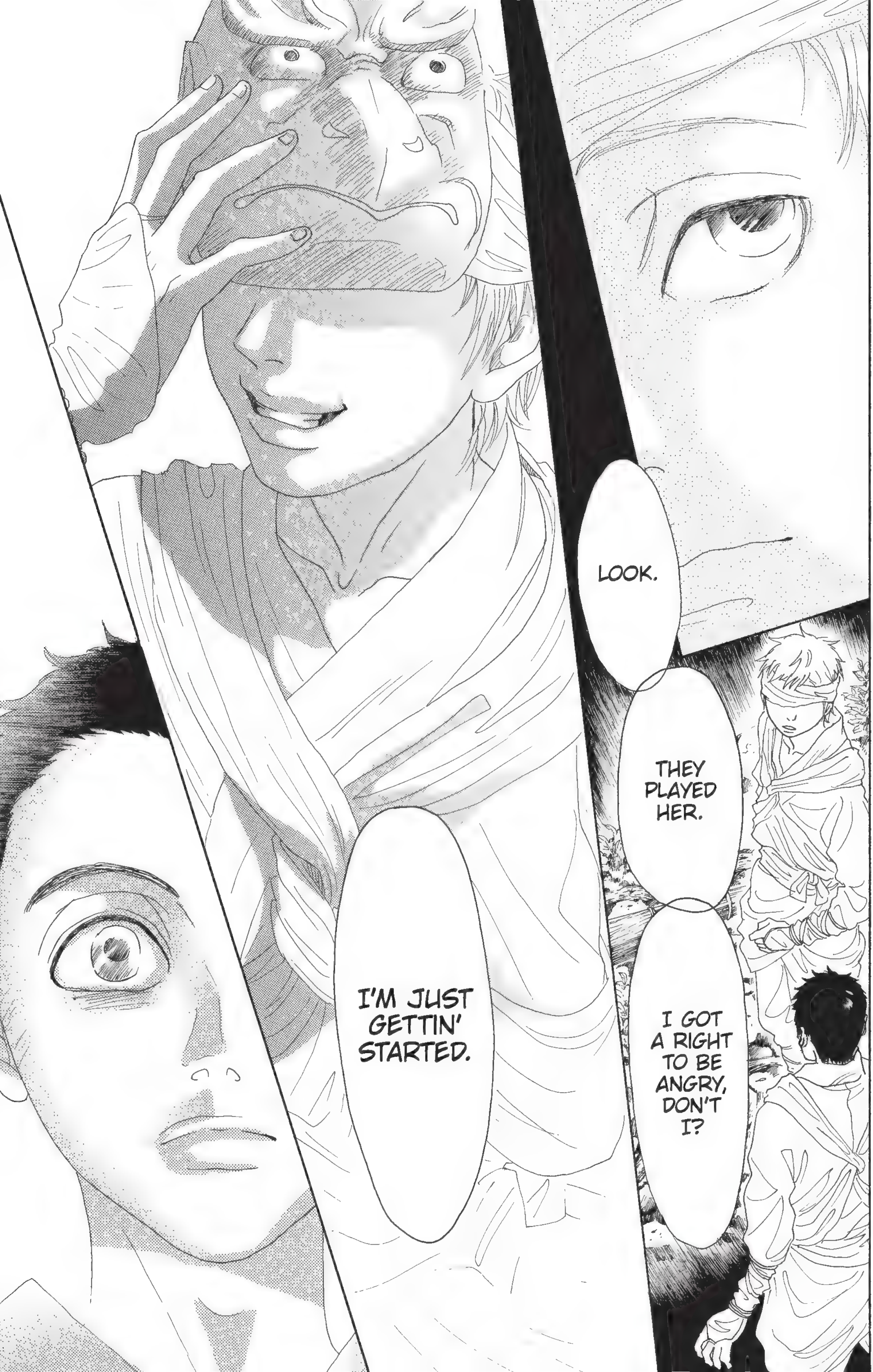

WHAT D'YA WANNA DO?
おりゃあああ
HOOAAAAH!
わ
RAAAAH!
WE COULD JUST... SAY WE DID IT.
AH HA HA...
おー
RAAH!
あー
YAAH!
わー
HAAH!
EXCUSE ME...
HUH?!
WON'T YOU JOIN THE FESTIVAL ALONGSIDE YOUR UNDER-CLASSMEN?

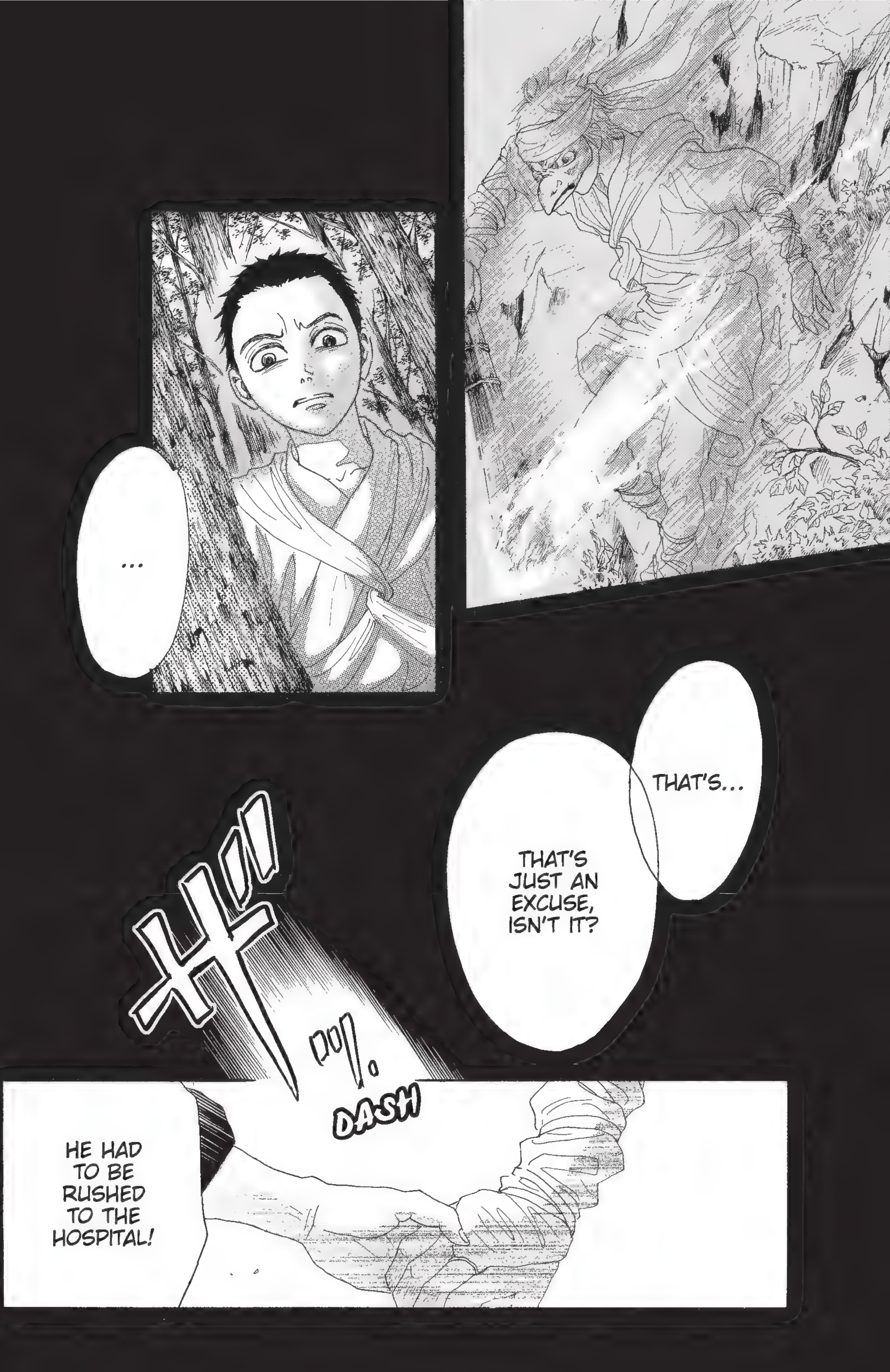

AH!
ザザッ
STEP...

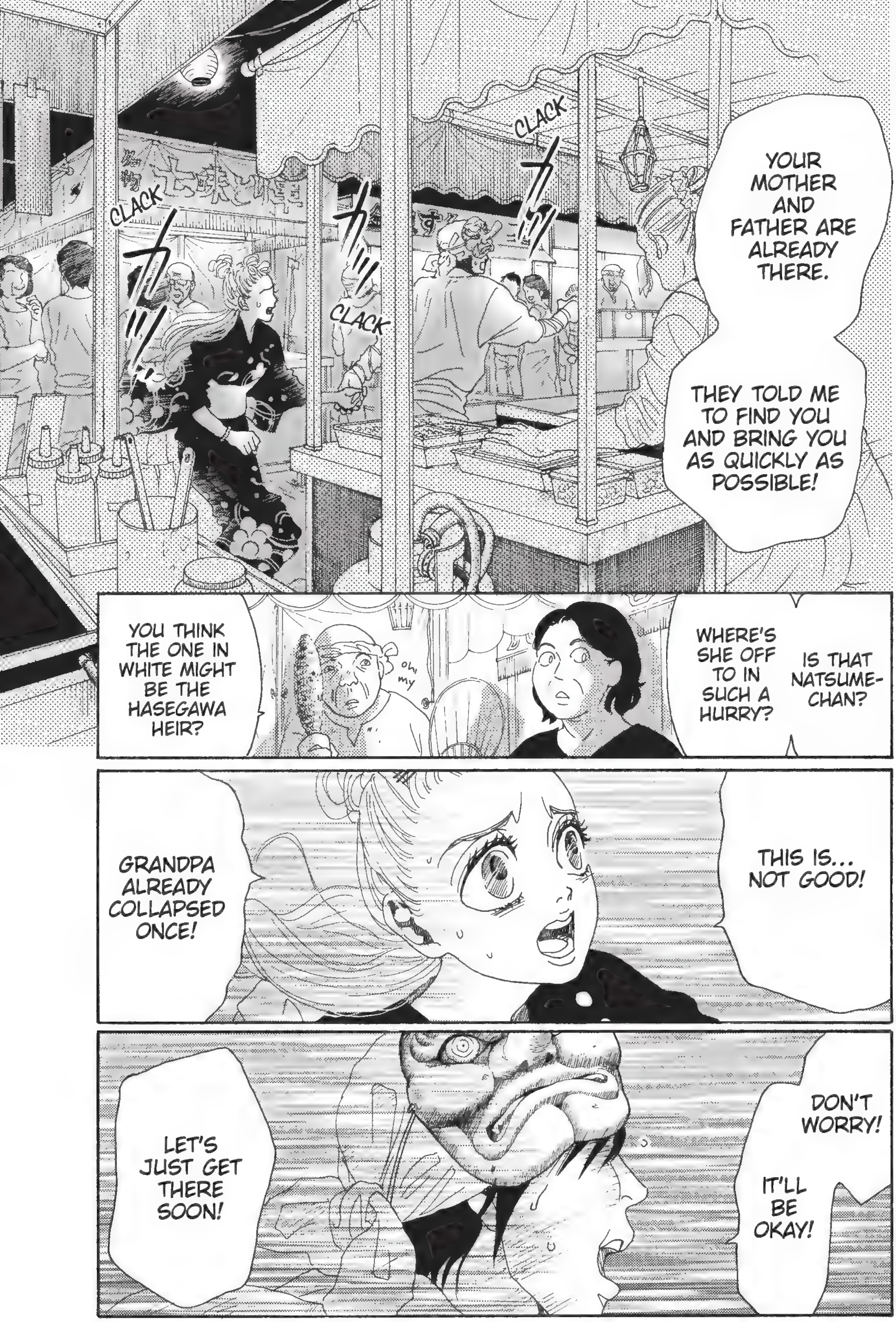

ゴッ
WHAM
YEAAAAARGH!

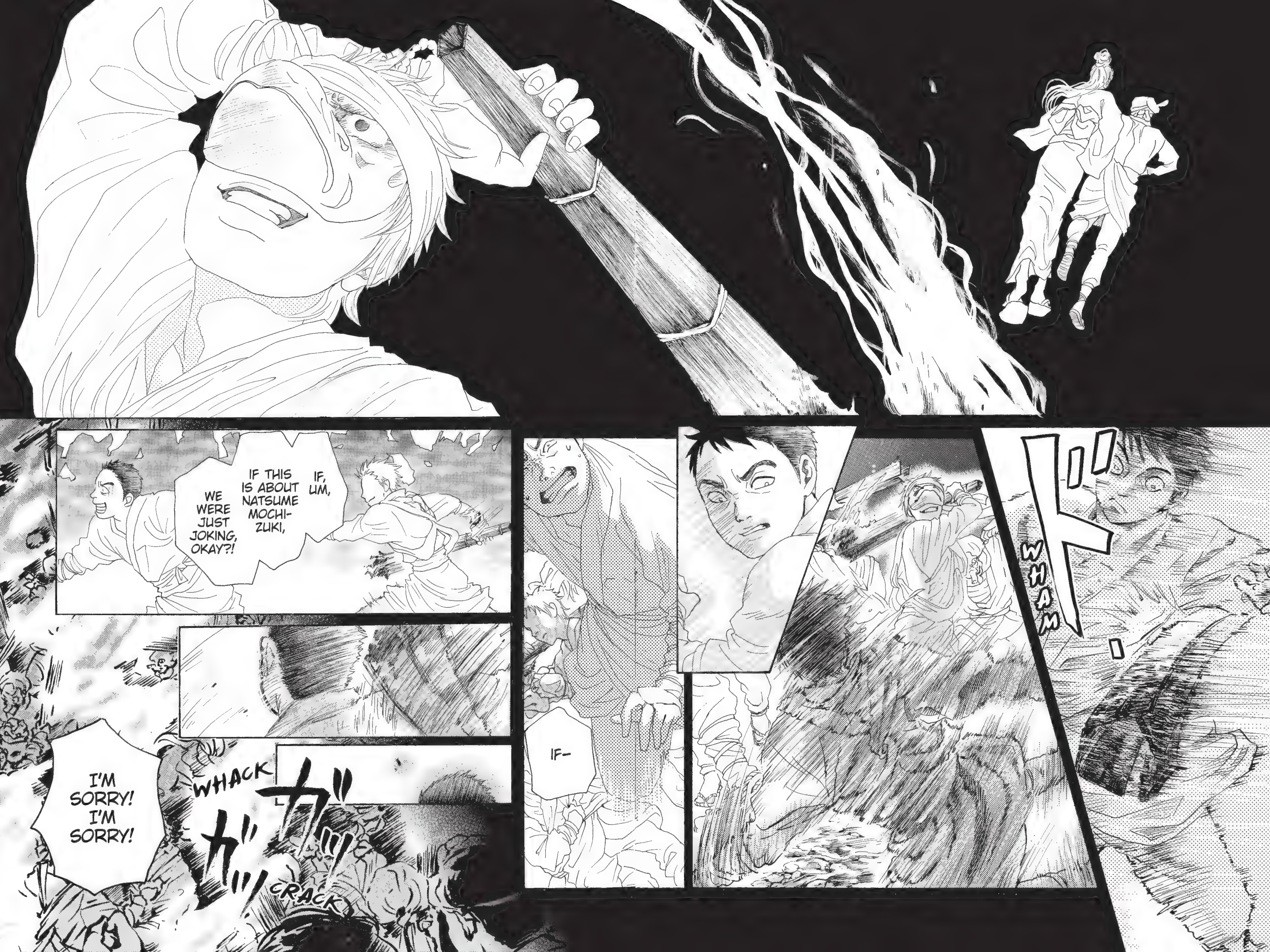

COME ON.
YOUR FRIEND'S ALREADY DOWN THERE HAVING FUN!
YOU KNOW, IF YOU JUMP DOWN, YOU COULD LOSE YOURSELF IN THE CROWD PRETTY EASILY...
I'M GIVING YOU THIS CHANCE TO ESCAPE.
WHOOSH

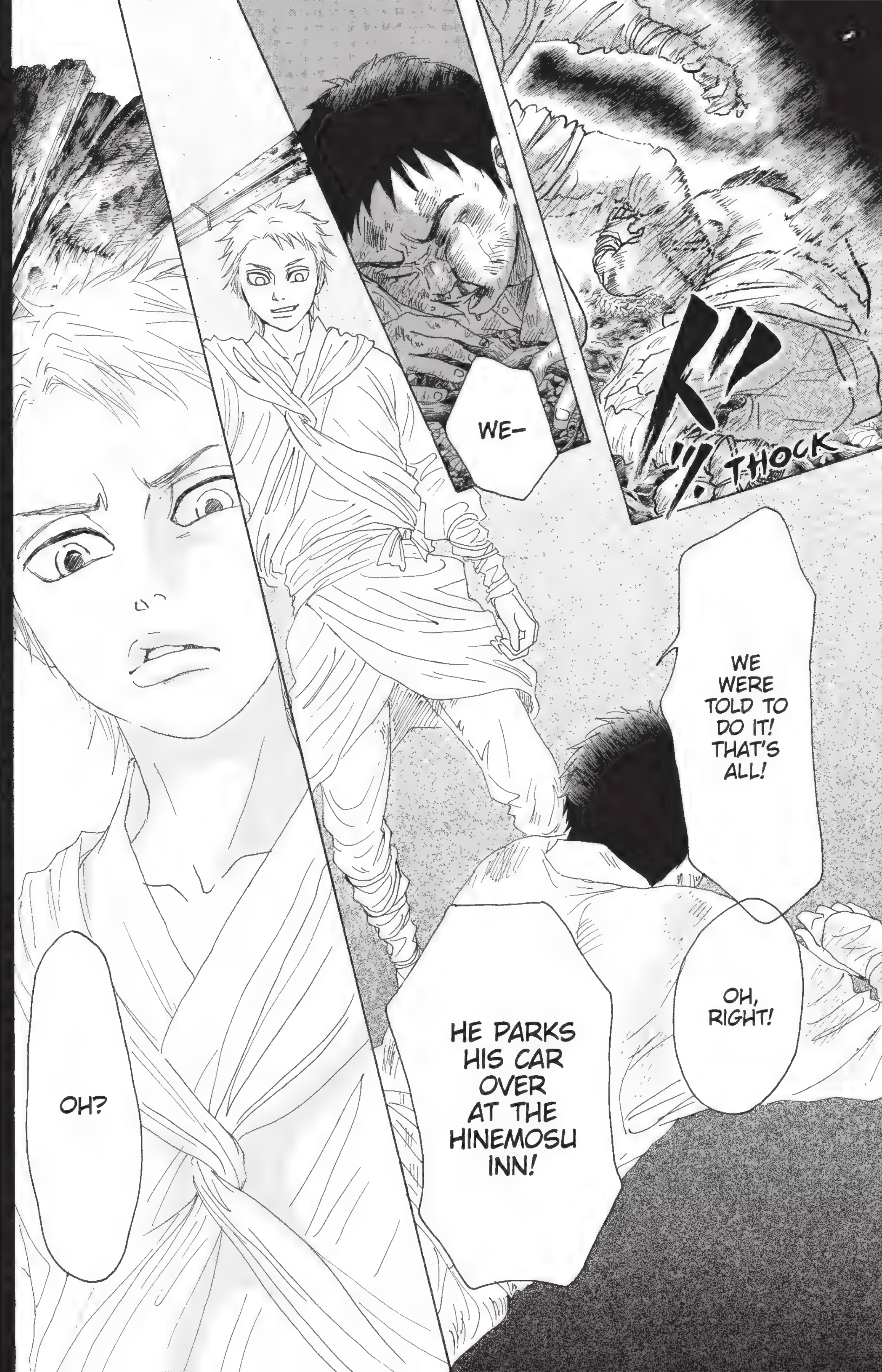

AAAH!
URGH!
SLIP
KOU!
HEY ... YOU SCARED 'EM ENOUGH, DIDN'T YA?
OH?

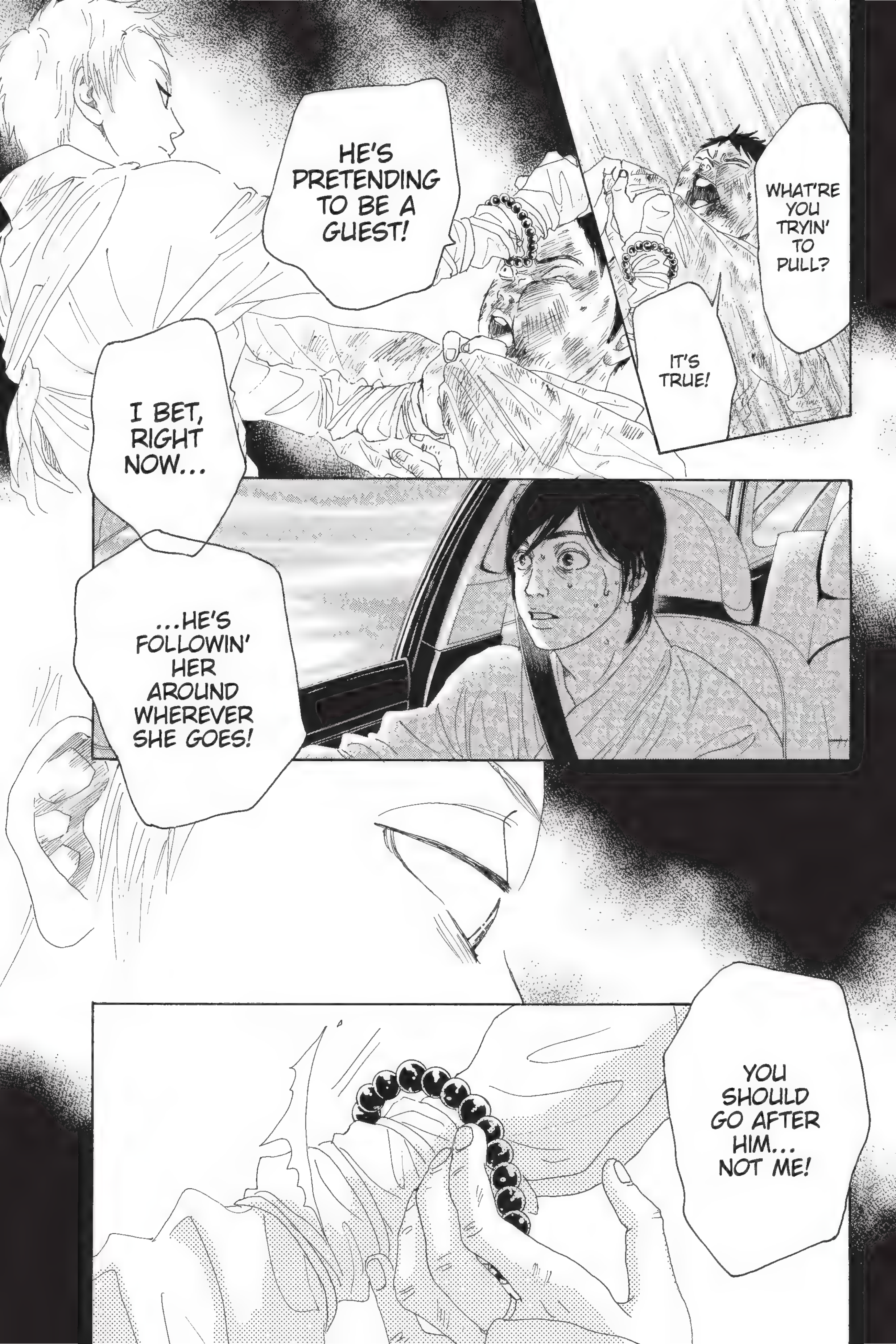

LOOK.
THEY PLAYED HER.
I GOT A RIGHT TO BE ANGRY, DON'T I?
I'M JUST GETTIN' STARTED.

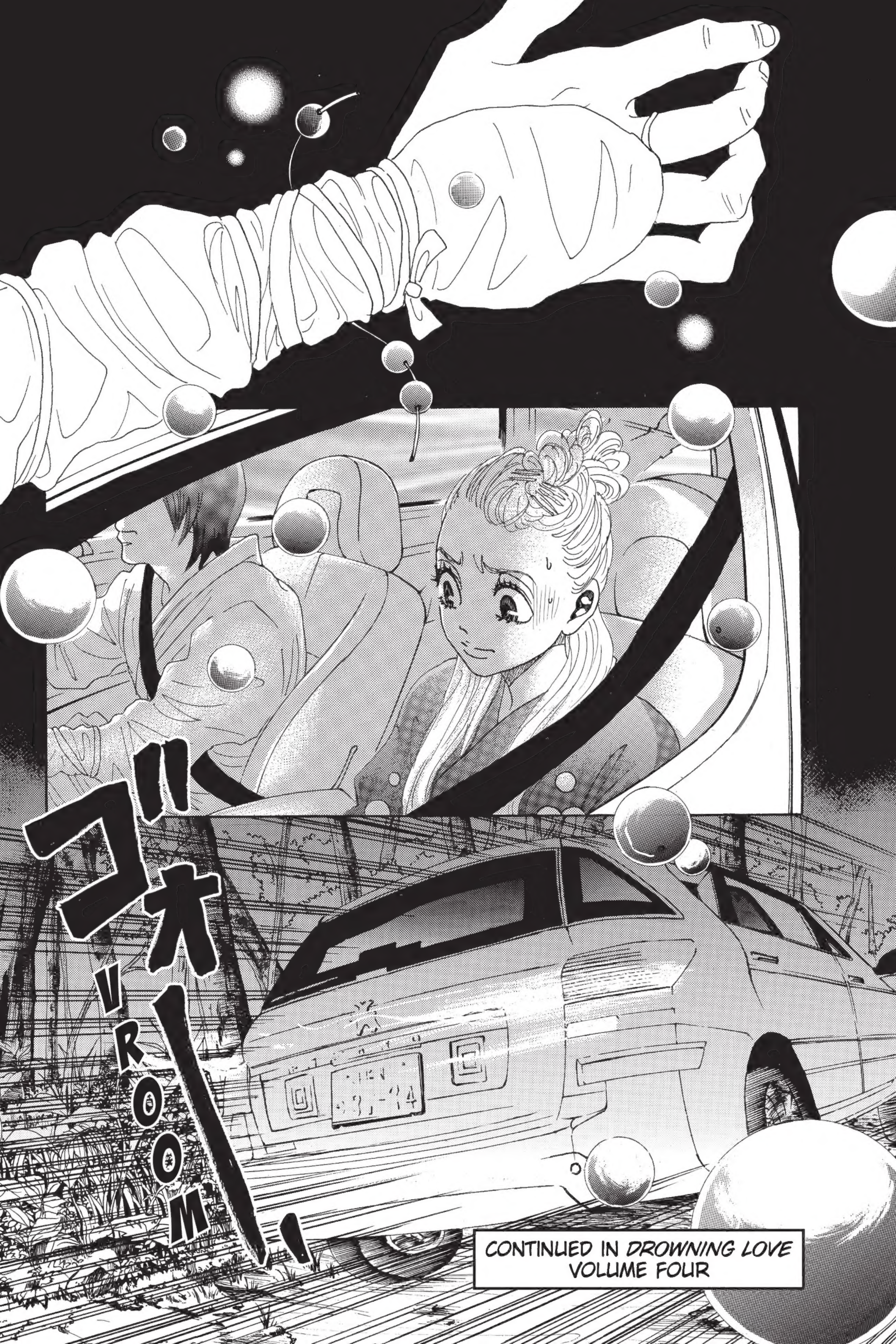

...
THAT'S...
THAT'S JUST AN EXCUSE, ISN'T IT?
DASH
HE HAD TO BE RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL!


CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER ARE ALREADY THERE.
THEY TOLD ME TO FIND YOU AND BRING YOU AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!
IS THAT NATSUME-CHAN?
WHERE'S SHE OFF TO IN SUCH A HURRY?
oh, my
YOU THINK THE ONE IN WHITE MIGHT BE THE HASEGAWA HEIR?
THIS IS... NOT GOOD!
GRANDPA ALREADY COLLAPSED ONCE!
DON'T WORRY!
IT'LL BE OKAY!
LET'S JUST GET THERE SOON!


ドッ
WHAM
IF–
IF, UM,
IF THIS IS ABOUT NATSUME MOCHIZUKI,
WE WERE JUST JOKING, OKAY?!
ガッ
WHACK
ガッ
CRACK
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!


THOCK
WE-
WE WERE TOLD TO DO IT! THAT'S ALL!
OH, RIGHT!
HE PARKS HIS CAR OVER AT THE HINEMOSU INN!
OH?


WHAT'RE YOU TRYIN' TO PULL?
IT'S TRUE!
HE'S PRETENDING TO BE A GUEST!
I BET, RIGHT NOW...
...HE'S FOLLOWIN' HER AROUND WHEREVER SHE GOES!
YOU SHOULD GO AFTER HIM... NOT ME!



CONTINUED IN *DROWNING LOVE*
VOLUME FOUR

Drowning
Love

Drowning Love 3

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